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THE CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO ISLAM
IN THE WRITINGS OF SAMUEL ZWEMER AND KENNETH CRAGG

By
LAURENCE R. MCCULLOCH
B.A. Westminster College

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To my wife

SHIRLEY,

whose patience, love, and encouragement
were paralleled by her greatly-appreciated help.

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THE CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO ISLAM
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INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject

1. The Subject Stated and Explained

Samuel Zwemer and Kenneth Cragg in their writings are both greatly concerned with the witness of Christianity to the followers of Islam. Zwemer's first books and those of Cragg are separated in time by over fifty years, the dates being 1900 and 1956 respectively. Such a difference in time introduces the possibility of significant differences in the content and nature of their writings. This would mean differences in their approach to Islam itself, both in theory and in practice. The purpose of this study is to compare the writings of these two men, with respect to statements reflecting their ideas concerning the valid Christian approach to Islam and its followers. The purpose of this study is to ascertain whether or not the suspected differences exist, and if so, to observe their nature.

2. The Subject Justified

The world scene, and the thoughts and feelings of nations have undergone radical changes in the past fifty or sixty years. This has been reflected also in

significant changes in the field of missionary endeavor, and in the ways such endeavor has been received by those to whom missionaries have been sent. Change is always subject to resistance, because there is deep spiritual, emotional, and sentimental attachment to the status quo at any given point, especially on the part of missionaries. Hence when a succeeding missionary generation proposes new, or seemingly new ideas to its predecessors, these ideas are sometimes viewed with fear and suspicion that the old order, which is often equated with Truth, and which indeed may actually be true, is in danger of debilitation or destruction. This is a legitimate fear, but under such a presupposition, it may happen that the new ideas are not given their deserved hearing and evaluation. If the new ideas are invalid, this will be readily seen and judged, and they can be discarded; if the new ideas are validly new, or are really fresh expressions of the old valid ideas, then it is a general loss not to discover this.

Since almost two generations separate the prime periods of the lives of Zwemer and Cragg, and since they have both occupied places of authority and influence in the fields of Islamics and missions, it is considered fitting and useful to observe the nature of the relationship of their ideas. The Church is becoming ever more concerned with its witness to the world, therefore it must continually investigate all possible channels for the work of the Holy Spirit.

A possible criticism of this comparison stems from the nature of the materials and the situation. This criticism was raised by Kenneth Cragg himself, in a letter responding to a personal question from this writer. The criticism has to do with the fact that Zwemer's outlook is contained in a large and complete body of material, evoked from a lifetime of experience, whereas Cragg's writing is comparatively limited in quantity and in scope of time, and does not represent, in a sense, finished thought. Hence the writings of the two men perhaps cannot be validly compared.

The only reply to this is that on one hand no book or writing necessarily represents the finished or complete thought of an author, regardless of his experience or the termination of his thought by death. Hence the apparent inequalities in this respect do not need to preclude the comparison of their views. Moreover, Cragg is the only logical person to set alongside Zwemer, because of the sharp relevance each has to both missions and Islamics together. Also, since the problems involved are contemporary and urgent, some sort of assessment of the situation cannot be put off until Cragg dies or otherwise completes his thinking. A possible comfort for those who may still object, is that such an assessment as this must also enter the ranks of the "incomplete," along with Cragg and Zwemer and all the rest.

3. The Subject Delimited

Both Zwemer and Cragg touch upon great quantities of material about Islam and Christianity, as these religions exist separately and in relationship. The purpose of this study is neither to present Islam nor Christianity as such, but rather to present them as they come in contact, according to the views and methods of these two men. Only those statements will be considered which in some way illuminate the relationship described as "the Christian approach to Islam." Other material will be introduced in the first chapter, but only as background.

B. The Sources for the Study

The source material for this study will be (1) books and articles by Zwemer, (2) books and articles by Cragg, (3) limited material on Islam and on missions, and (4) biographical material about Zwemer and Cragg.

C. The Method of Procedure

First, a chapter will be devoted to background material. The lives of Zwemer and Cragg will be briefly sketched, after which there will be an attempt to outline very briefly the basic theological outlook of each man, as it can be gleaned from some of his writing. Also, in the first chapter, a brief discussion of some aspects of Islam will be given, since Islam itself is the center of the whole problem at hand.

The second chapter will be devoted to several aspects of Zwemer's approach to Islam, and the third chapter will treat Cragg's approach similarly.

The summary and conclusion will consist of noting and interpreting some significant similarities and differences in the ideas and methods of these two men concerning the Christian approach to Islam.

The spelling of Islamic terms in English presents somewhat of a problem, since there is no final authority on this subject. Zwemer and Cragg, both of them Arabic scholars, used different spellings. Although the spellings used by Cragg are viewed as preferable by this writer, it seemed best for the convenience of the reader to attempt some semblance of consistency within chapters. Hence in chapter one, Cragg's spellings and terminology are used as being considered most accurate. The most significant of these are: Muhummad, Quran, and Muslim (Zwemer's rendering: Mohammed, Koran, and Moslem). In chapter two, Zwemer's usage is adopted throughout, to avoid a confusing shift back and forth from the spelling in quoted material to a different spelling in the text. In chapter three, Cragg's spellings are used throughout, and likewise in the summary and conclusion.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

A. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with material that may illuminate his understanding of the ideas presented in the next two chapters concerning the actual approach to Islam, as it is viewed by Zwemer and Cragg.

Since a man's life and experiences greatly influence his thinking and expressions, a biographical sketch of each of these men is given. Then, in light of the fact that a person's approach to another religion is governed in part by the nature of his beliefs about his own religion, an attempt is made to outline something of the theological thinking of each of these men. Since neither of them wrote a book of systematic theology, their beliefs have to be in part observed in statements involving their beliefs, but not necessarily about them. Finally, a brief sketch of Islam itself is given. Since detailed descriptions of Islam are widely available, the discussion is here confined to some statistics, the early history of Islam, and some later developments, with

special reference to a book by Stephen Neill. This may give some insight into Islam's current situation, and it provides an opportunity to orient Zwemer and Cragg with regard to these later developments. A summary will endeavor to bring this material together.

B. The Life of Samuel Zwemer

1. Birth, Childhood, and Family Life

Samuel Marinus Zwemer was born of Dutch ancestry at Vriesland, Michigan, on April 12, 1867. Of the five brothers in the family, four later became ministers. In the family routine, all important decisions were made only after prayer. There was a continual sense of Christ's fellowship and His Divine guidance in the home. Each meal was marked by Bible reading and prayer. Zwemer's early sense of commitment to Christ is grounded in this family life that he led.¹ Of his father, Zwemer later said that his own understanding of the Fatherhood of God was because of the example of the life of Adriaan Zwemer.² When his mother died in 1886, she told Samuel beforehand that he had been placed in the cradle with the prayer that he might be a missionary.³

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1. J. Christy Wilson, *Apostle to Islam*, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1952, p. 21.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

2. Education and Missionary Interest

In 1883, Zwemer entered Hope College as one of a class of seven students, of whom four later were to go to the mission field. During his senior year, he became a Student Volunteer, after hearing an address by Robert Wilder. That spring and summer Zwemer worked as a colporteur for the American Bible Society. He attended The Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in America, at New Brunswick, New Jersey, during which time he worked in the Throop Avenue Mission, "winning men to Christ and visiting the poor."¹

In 1888, talks with James Cantine and Philip Phelps, who were seminary classmates, resulted in the idea of the Arabian Mission, a self-supporting enterprise on behalf of the Muslims of Arabia. The Arabian Mission was duly formed and James Cantine was the first to sail. Zwemer was ordained a missionary on May 29, 1890.²

3. Missionary Experience and Writings³

Samuel Zwemer sailed for Arabia on June 28, 1890, and took up pioneer work upon his arrival there. For twenty-two years he served in Arabia, until 1912, when he was called to Cairo, Egypt, to take up another post.

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1. Ibid., pp. 27-28, 30.
2. Ibid., pp. 31-32.
3. Ibid., pp. 39-205.

He and his wife, an Australian missionary whom he had met in Arabia, went to Cairo, where he spent the next seventeen years among the Muslims of Egypt.

Zwemer's literary work was very extensive. In 1911 he founded the scholarly journal "The Moslem World," which he edited or co-edited until 1947, when he was eighty years of age.¹ During his lifetime, he wrote a large number of books and articles about Islam, missions, and the Christian life.

4. Later years²

In 1930 Zwemer was called to Princeton Seminary to fill the chair of Professor of History of Religion and Christian Missions. He served in this position until 1938, when he retired at the age of 71. In the years that followed, he continued preaching, writing, and editing. Shortly after his eightieth birthday, in 1949, he returned for a visit to Arabia to take part in the sixtieth anniversary celebration of the mission he had helped to found in that country.

Samuel Zwemer died on April 2, 1952, a few days short of his eighty-fifth birthday, after a full life in the service of his Lord.

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1. His comments on this occasion are given in an article, "Looking Backward and Forward from the Bridge," *The Moslem World*, XXXVII (1947), pp. 173-176.

C. The Life of Kenneth Cragg

Albert Kenneth Cragg was born in England on March 8, 1913. He attended Blackpool Grammar School, Jesus College, Oxford, and Tyndale Hall, Bristol. He was awarded numerous prizes in the course of his study, and he has earned several degrees besides the Doctor of Philosophy degree which he holds. A member of the Anglican Church, he was made a Deacon in 1936, and a Priest in 1937. He was Chaplain of All Saint's, in Beirut, Lebanon, from 1939 to 1947, and was Warden of St. Justin's House, also in Beirut, from 1942 to 1947. During these same years, 1942-1947, he served as Assistant Professor of Philosophy in the American University in Beirut.

Cragg is considered "a leading Christian student of Islam," and he served as Professor of Arabic and Islamics at the Hartford Seminary Foundation, in Connecticut, from 1951 to 1956. In 1954, he received the Rockefeller Traveling Scholarship. Since 1956, he has participated in the Study Program in Islamics of the Near East Christian Council, on a special assignment which involved lectures throughout the Middle East in various Muslim lands, where he addressed both Muslim and Christian groups. Cragg is Canon of St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem, where the Study Program has its headquarters. His residence is at Canterbury, though responsibilities

at Jerusalem are still maintained. Since 1961 he has been honorary Canon of Canterbury. He is at present serving as Warden of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury. He was married in 1940, and has three sons. There was also a daughter, now deceased.

Cragg was co-editor, with Edwin Calverly, of "The Muslim World" from 1952 to 1960; thus he has had a part in the journal that Samuel Zwemer founded in 1911.¹ Cragg is the author of The Call of the Minaret and Sandals at the Mosque. He has also written a number of articles, and has translated the Arabic work, City of Wrong, by Kamel Hussein.²

D. The Theological Outlooks of Zwemer and Cragg

1. Zwemer's Theological Outlook

As may be seen from his biography, Zwemer was, theologically speaking, a product of his home background and ancestry, his conservative Dutch Reformed tradition, his education, and his friendships. Personally, moreover, he was interested in such evangelical movements as the Student Volunteers, and he greatly admired the lives and ways of Judson, Carey, Hudson Taylor, and the other early

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1. When Zwemer retired from the editorship of "The Moslem World" in 1947, the name was changed to "The Muslim World."
2. Since no full biography of Dr. Cragg has been written, the above facts have been compiled from the dust-jackets of his two books, and from the article in Who's Who, London, Adam and Charles Black, 1962, p. 684.

evangelical missionaries.¹ In the relative isolation of the mission field, Zwemer maintained and propagated his conservative viewpoint, which did not basically alter throughout his lifetime. Zwemer's theological position was briefly and plainly described by Kenneth Scott Latourette in these words: "Dr. Zwemer was frankly a conservative Evangelical. In him there was no wavering or hesitation in the proclamation of the historic Evangelical faith..."²

The following pages briefly record samples of Zwemer's theology as expressed in his writings. There is necessarily great selectivity involved in presenting this material, and those items were chosen which would illuminate some of the driving themes of Zwemer's thinking in a few limited areas. Taken as an isolated group, these statements may seem to paint Zwemer's beliefs as harsh, cold, and unloving. But in practice they certainly were not so; his love and compassion for his fellow man and his concept of love in all aspects of the Godhead were as warm as could be desired.³ His conservative, evangelical, and Calvinistic viewpoint influenced his ways of expressing love, but it in no way lessened the warmth and humanity of that love as it was manifested

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1. Samuel Zwemer, *Thinking Missions with Christ*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1934, p. 135.
2. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
3. *Ibid.*

in his life.¹

a. God

Much of the urgency that Zwemer felt for missions was rooted in his beliefs about God. He knew God's love, but also the omnipotence, holiness, and justice through which that love functions.

Zwemer saw God as One, the Creator, called Father; He is the only true and living God, Who sent His Son Jesus Christ from Heaven and revealed His will through Him.²

Zwemer regarded the Fatherhood of God as one of His primary aspects.³ He saw God's love in Christ as unfathomably deep,⁴ yet revealed in the phrase "God so loved the world" there is also the just wrath of God. This wrath forms the background of God's revelation and His love for sinners.⁵ Zwemer emphasized the sovereignty, holiness, and justice of God.⁶ God is absolutely, unchangeably, and eternally just; "He must do right,"⁷ hence "He must and will punish sinners."⁸ Both God's

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1. Ibid.
2. Samuel Zwemer, *Dynamic Christianity and the World Today*, London, Intervarsity Fellowship, 1939, p. 20.
3. Samuel Zwemer, *The Moslem Doctrine of God*, New York, American Tract Society, 1905, p. 110.
4. Samuel Zwemer, *Evangelism Today*, New York, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1944, p. 25.
5. Ibid., p. 30.
6. Ibid., p. 28.
7. Zwemer, *The Moslem Doctrine of God*, p. 112.
8. Zwemer, *Evangelism Today*, p. 23.

wrath against sin and His love for sinners are to be seen in Calvary.¹

b. Christ

Jesus was an historical personality Who lived a perfect life, was killed by the Jews, rose again from the dead and is now in Heaven, from whence He makes His appeal through His apostles.² He is the Lord of and Source of Salvation. He establishes hearts, produces holiness, and is the fountain and source of love.³

Christ is the Son of God and He is Savior and Lord. He is the Creator, and the Crown-Prince of the Universe, with Crown-Rights over all the earth,⁴ and He is enthroned at God's right hand.⁵

God revealed His love in the life and death of Christ,⁶ for Christ came and died and rose again to save men from their sins.⁷ This death was necessary and valid as the only atonement for sin.⁸

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1. Ibid., p. 22.
2. Zwemer, Dynamic Christianity and the World Today, p. 21.
3. Ibid., p. 22.
4. This idea is developed in an article by Zwemer, "The Crown Rights of Christ," The Moslem World, XIII (1923), 331ff.
5. Zwemer, Dynamic Christianity and the World Today, p. 38.
6. Zwemer, Evangelism Today, p. 22.
7. Zwemer, Dynamic Christianity and the World Today, p. 43.
8. Zwemer, Evangelism Today, p. 16.

c. The Cross

The Cross is regarded as the "demonstration and manifestation of the love of God," the place where "God's holiness, God's mercy, and man's sin meet in the heart of the Redeemer."¹ The message of the Cross is the heart of the Gospel, and it indicates sin as well as salvation.² It is the way by which men are revealed to themselves, and convicted of sin.³

d. Man

Zwemer regarded mankind as "one organic whole," one in the sin of Adam, one in the "new man" in Christ, and one in moral unity, in its consciousness of sin.⁴ He saw the whole world under condemnation, guilty before God,⁵ and of such nature that meditation upon Christ would bring to a man deep personal conviction, contrition, and a sense of utter moral bankruptcy.⁶ God in His love calls man, however, to salvation and to holiness.⁷

e. Sin and Salvation

Zwemer strongly emphasized the fact of sin, and the basic nature of Original Sin, the "corrupter of man's heart," as a fundamental concept of the Christian faith.⁸

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1. Ibid., p. 30.

2. Ibid., p. 29.

3. Ibid., p. 33.

4. Zwemer, *Dynamic Christianity and the World Today*, p. 20.

5. Zwemer, *Evangelism Today*, p. 29.

6. Ibid., p. 36.

7. Zwemer, *Dynamic Christianity and the World Today*, p. 20.

8. Zwemer, *Evangelism Today*, op. cit., p. 38.

He quoted J. S. Whale on sin, "Public enemy Number One is neither ignorance nor stupidity nor defective social environment but SIN."¹ Sin's havoc calls for "instant attention...radical treatment before it is forever too late."² Zwemer was certain of the judgment against sin, saying that if there is no such judgment, there is no need of a Savior.³ The necessary redemption must be by the Blood of Christ, by His Cross.⁴

f. The Gospel

Zwemer described the Gospel as the message of salvation, a message of God, not of man.⁵ The primary message is Christ and Him crucified, so preached that it is "a certain interpretation of Christianity emphasizing the objective atonement of Christ, the necessity of new birth or conversion and salvation through faith."⁶ The presentation of the Gospel "must point to Calvary and the Atonement."⁷ The evangelistic preaching of the Gospel "preaches the Cross to convict of secret sins."⁸ His concepts of sin and the wrath of God led him to specify the Gospel in these words, "To take the condemnation of sin and the wrath of God against sin out of the Gospel message is to cut its very nerve."⁹

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1. Ibid., p. 35.
2. Ibid., p. 29.
3. Ibid., p. 28.
4. Ibid., p. 38.
5. Ibid., p. 7.
6. Ibid., p. 16.
7. Ibid., p. 35.
8. Ibid., p. 34.
9. Ibid., p. 37.

g. The Church

From a study of I Thessalonians, Zwemer characterized the Church as follows.¹ It is the Church of God which is in Jesus Christ. It is a company of brethren, and it is founded on the teaching of the Gospel. Its doors are open to all and its watchword is love for all humanity. It is a missionary Church, and is dedicated to service. It is bound together by the ideas of forgiveness; universal love, and benevolence.

The cause and life of the Church is mission; the Church exists by mission. If there is no mission, there is no Church.²

2. Cragg's Theological Outlook

Kenneth Cragg has not yet had the same occasion or opportunity of spelling out in his two books some of his doctrinal beliefs as specifically as Zwemer did in the course of his long and prolific career of writing. Much of Cragg's concern is centered around the redemptive aspects of Christianity, as these are a main thrust of his books.

It is to be observed that Cragg is living in an age in which the Church is seeking new unity and ecumenical outreach. It is moreover an age which to some extent is influenced by the contemporary "agape"³theologies. Cragg has spent much of his life in the atmosphere of study and

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1. Zwemer, *Dynamic Christianity and the World Today*, p. 23-24.
2. Zwemer, *Evangelism Today*, p. 7.
3. An exposition of this emphasis in theology may be found in the works of Nels F. S. Ferre. See his book, *The Christian Fellowship*, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1940.

of scholastic institutions, and has also been a professor of philosophy for a number of years. Careful consideration of Cragg's biographical material has revealed no mention of any title or position which describes him as a missionary in any conventional sense of the word. Many of his posts have been those of leadership, in his Church and in such organizations as the Near East Christian Council, for which he has been in a sense the spokesman in the field of Islamics. As such a leader, Cragg is seen to be in wide and close contact with a great many elements in current theology, politics, and scholastic life. These facts are of significance in observing Cragg's theological thinking.

a. God

Cragg tends to lay primary emphasis on God's love and grace and says little about the punitive and wrathful aspects of God's activity.

God, the Creator, created man in His own image for "loving fellowship."¹ God is by nature a revealing God; He has a will to reveal, and a correspondingly strong will to redeem.² Concerning His sovereignty, "...He subdues all things unto Himself having to do with men His subjects, but does so consistently with their status as men and His nature and character as God."³ God is

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1. Kenneth Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1959, p. 133.
2. Kenneth Cragg, *the Call of the Minaret*, New York Oxford University Press, 1956, p. 310.
3. Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, p. 127.

widely compassionate,¹ His nature being such that it requires initiatives of grace on His part.²

b. Christ

Cragg believes that Christ is universal, belonging to all men.³ Of Christ's authority and finality, he says, "God in Christ is the God to end all gods."⁴ Christ's suffering expresses the Divine love.⁵ The purpose of Christ is described thus:

In the Incarnate Savior, God reconciles the world unto Himself in the only adequately Divine counter-action to the challenge of "the gods"--the gods of self and sin,⁶ the idolatrous substitutes in which all evil consists.

c. The Cross

The Cross is viewed as an act of God, and it has an attractive and compulsive power in its effect upon men.⁸ In the event of the Cross is to be seen the "representative expression of what men do in their wrongness;" it reveals humanity.⁹ But it is not simply representative, for the Cross has objective reality, which Cragg shows when he says that "Even where it remains despised and rejected by the soul of man, the Cross stands majestically...Its grace will never let us go...."¹⁰

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1. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, p. xi.
2. Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, p. 128.
3. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 183.
4. Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, p. 133.
5. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 300.
6. Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, p. 133.
7. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 300.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 298.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
10. Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, p. 138.

d. Man

Cragg's view of man takes both sides of the fence. On the one hand he observes the "radical nature of human wrongness," describing human nature as wayward and sinful, and the "natural man" as recalcitrant.¹ He notes that "our human *lesé majesté* as sinners" requires God's initiatives of grace.² On the other hand Cragg sees man as having no small degree of dignity, which must be recognized, for "He who belittles the proper dignity of manking, abnegates a proper devotion to God."³ This dignity involves freedom and fellowship and responsibility in the relationship with God:

Man's redemption involves the freely willed acceptance of the terms of his remaking. Clearly they cannot be compulsive. For then they would destroy the fellowship between God and man and the responsibility which is man's dignity.

e. Sin

Sin is the factor which set the situation for the Cross.⁵ The locations of sin in the world, the "seats of the 'other gods'" as Cragg calls them, are "wills and selves and societies."⁶ Man himself is defenceless against sin.⁷ Indeed, sin resides even in man's goodness, for "I must know how the sin even in my law-abidingness

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1. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 324.
2. Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, p. 128.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
5. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 301.
6. Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, p. 134.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

condemns me."¹ The solution for sin is to have something done about man's nature.²

f. Salvation

Cragg believes that in order to overcome man's sinfulness:

Only redemption suffices--an enterprise for man's re-making that, within the conditions of freedom saves man from himself and restores him through pardon and newness of life to his stature in fellowship with God.³

The act of redemption is done by God,⁴ and the result of redemption is the "'spiritual' man in regeneration and pardon."⁵ Redemption involves the "remaking of the heart,"⁶ "to break the bondage of my self-centeredness and so bring men into the beatitude of His true Lordship, and into love of Him as the fulfillment of the self He made for love."⁷

g. The Gospel

Cragg describes the Gospel, or the Good News, as the message that:

...assures us in the Cross that it reaches beyond our despair, while leaving us no ground for refuge in complacency. In its offer of pardon and newness of life it brings⁸ the very power of God to the restoring of our souls.

It is called "a Gospel of peace-making by Divine inter-

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1. Ibid., p. 134.
2. Ibid., p. 131.
3. Ibid., p. 133.
4. Ibid.
5. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 324.
6. Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, p. 134.
7. Ibid., p. 135.
8. Ibid., p. 138.

vention,"¹ for the Good news of peace is that the necessary Diving work is accomplished in Christ, bringing "...the peace of personal wholeness for man and of the acknowledged worship of God."² The Good News is that God is ready "...to bring under the one Lordship all alienating worships and all the insubordination of sin."³ The element of peace, and the emphasis on the present life with reference to the whole man, are frequently brought out by Cragg.

h. The Church

Cragg assigns great importance to the Church. Of the purpose of the Church today, he states that:

The Church lives, let us be clear, to bear witness unto the Truth. This is its manward vocation...its whole Godward vocation is to worship and adore the God of that Truth. The ground of its address to the world is simply the wonder and the Gospel of Christ.⁴

The propagating of the Gospel, the telling of the "Good News of man's remaking," by its own remade individuals, is the purpose of the Church.⁵ Cragg stresses the importance of the life and witness of the members of the Church, as compared to theological strivings with other faiths, when he says, "All our ~~strivings~~ ^{EFFORT} after a 'frontier theology'...must terminate in the contagion of loving Christian personality."⁶

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1. Ibid., p. 133.
2. Ibid., p. 135.
3. Ibid., p. 128.
4. Ibid., p. 141.
5. Ibid., p. 140.
6. Ibid., p. 129.

E. A Sketch of Islam

1. Population and Distribution

The population and scope of the Islamic world give some indication of the reason for the concern these two men have for Christianity's witness to the followers of this religion. The present Islamic population of the world is 430,325,000, distributed thus:

North America	35,000
South America	353,000
Europe	12,802,000
Asia	328,238,000
Africa	88,791,000
Australasia	105,000

Islam is the second most populous religion, next to Christianity, and there are twice as many Muslims in the world as there are Protestants.¹

That Islam has grown and spread greatly in the last half-century is evident from statistics prepared by Zwemer, upon which he based the urgency of Muslim evangelization at that time(1909).² The total Muslim population then was reckoned at 232,733,960, or roughly half of today's figure. The distribution noted by Zwemer is also significantly different from that of today.

2. Early History of Islam

Islam came into being through a man named

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1. Henry Hansen, ed., The World Almanac and Book of Facts, New York, New York World Telegram and the Sun, 1962, p. 719.
2. Samuel Zwemer, Islam, A Challenge to Faith, New York, Student Volunteer Movement, 1909, p. 166, insert.

Muhummad, born about A.D. 570, at Mecca, in Arabia. He rebelled against the idolatry of his time, and wished for a monotheistic emphasis. To this effect he began to prophesy in 611, but he was resisted by his fellow-Meccans, whose persecution forced him to flee to Medina in 622. This flight is called the Hegira, and marks the beginning of the Muslim era.¹ Later Muhummad united most of the tribes of Arabia under the new religion, binding them by the call to convert idolaters either by persuasion or by force. His followers spread throughout the Near East, and into Africa and parts of Europe, overrunning the Christian churches as they went.² The momentum of this movement was stopped by force, as at the battle of Tours in 732, or otherwise dissipated, as by geographical barriers. However, Islam has from time to time renewed itself to advance in various areas, as at the fall of Constantinople in 1453, while the unsuccessful seige of Vienna in 1529 marked the climax and termination of large-scale Muslim conquests in Europe.³

3. Later Developments in Islam, with Reference to Zwemer and Cragg

The bulk of the material in this section is taken from a chapter in Christian Faith and Other Faiths, by

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1. H.U. Weitbrecht Stanton, An Outline of the Religion of Islam, Westminster, England, The Missionary Equipment and Literature Supply, 1925, pp. 7,10.
2. Ibid., pp. 10-12.
3. Zwemer, Islam, A Challenge to Faith, pp. 65-66.

Stephen Neill. The chapter is a sympathetic study of contemporary Islam, which is invaluable in understanding Kenneth Cragg's approach to Islam, and which also sheds light on Samuel Zwemer's approach. Reference to Zwemer and Cragg will be inserted at appropriate points in the discussion below.

The present day finds Islam in a state of crisis, because history does not seem to be bearing it up in its basic theses. Islam is an historical religion, and the Muslim looks for the divine society to evolve in history in the way that he understands it. This has not been happening. Christianity in a sense faces the same problem, but the normal separation of Church and state allows the Christian to take a more detached view. Also, Christianity is often at a disadvantage in the world, so the situation is not as crucial for the Christian.¹

It is very different for the Muslim. The story of Islam is built around the success motif, beginning with the successes of the Prophet Muhammad, and continuing with the phenomenal spread and progress of Islam for the next century, and thereafter more slowly for the next thousand years. Islam withstood the Crusades, and emerged in control of the former centers of Christianity. The spread of Islam to China, Indonesia, and Africa gave the Muslim a view of

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1. Stephen Neill, *Christian Faith and Other Faiths*, London, Oxford University Press, 1961, pp. 40-41.

"...a great and solid unity, stretching unbroken across the great land mass from the Atlantic almost to the Pacific Ocean."¹

From the nineteenth century onward a great reversal began to take place. Various Muslim political entities, such as the Turkish empire, began to break down, and the Western colonial powers began to set up rule in a number of Muslim lands. Thus to the discouragement of political collapses was added the degrading fact of the dominion of Western Christian powers over various parts of the Islamic world.²

It is important to observe that the formative years of Samuel Zwemer's life and experiences took place during at least some of the latter stages of that time of Muslim reversal and Western colonization. The bulk of his writing took place either during those times or in the light of their spirit.

Mission enterprise was just in the process of finding its footing then. William Carey had gone forth only a hundred years before Zwemer was ordained a missionary.³ The majority of missionary societies were founded after 1830.⁴ Ian Keith-Falconer, the first missionary to Arabia in modern

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1. Neill, op. cit., p. 42.
2. Ibid., p. 42-43.
3. R.H. Glover and J.H. Kane, *The Progress of World-Wide Missions*, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1960, p. 61.
4. Lars P. Qualben, *A History of the Christian Church*, New York, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1942, p. 394.

times, arrived there in 1885, just five years before Zwemer.¹ Much of Arabia had been unvisited by outsiders and unexplored by Western eyes.² To a large extent it was literally a land of darkness, poverty, and ignorance, and its people knew very little about the outside world. Nor could these masses care about the outside world, for very few of them were literate,³ and almost none would ever read a Western book, such as Zwemer might write, especially not in English. Thus he could count on few Muslim readers, especially in the beginning, though the situation changed greatly before he stopped writing.

Western people knew very little about Islam, its countries, its scope, or its people, so some missionary writing at that time took place on rather shallow informative levels, in order to fill this gap.⁴ The Western Christian powers were colonizing the Muslim lands, and the Christian Church was discovering these new areas of endeavor. The Christians were concerned about becoming acquainted with Islam, describing and enumerating Muslims, uplifting Muslims, evangelizing Muslims, and evaluating Islam with a view to its destruction.⁵ The point of view at this time

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1. Glover and Kane, op. cit., p. 243.
2. Samuel Zwemer, *Arabia, The Cradle of Islam*, New York, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1900, pp. 143ff.
3. Ibid., p. 379.
4. Note the comprehensive and intensive way in which this task is approached in the book edited by Zwemer, Wherry, and Barton, *The Mohammedan World of Today*, New York, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1906.
5. Ibid., chapter 1.

was characteristically objective and external.¹

This was the process that was going on when Zwemer happened on the scene. He took up the work on the bases upon which it was being done, and he made extensive contributions on those bases.

Because of these things, it may be said that Zwemer was in a sense a product of his times. The main reason why he did not touch upon or give regard to many of the issues which are today considered so important is that in his day those issues simply did not exist,² or at least not openly. For this reason the methods and attitudes of that day, which might be questioned today, were not questioned then because nothing better was known or considered necessary at that early stage. The most relevant fact in all of this is that during the prime of Zwemer's life in the early 1900's, the world of Islam and indeed the whole world were vastly different entities than they are today.

The Muslim world is characterized today by a spirit of nationalism, brought about by:

...a complex of causes--memories of past splendor, resentment over Muslim weakness and Christian strength, above all that obscure sense of malaise, the feeling that in some way history has gone awry, that somehow the

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1. H.A.R. Gibb, Mohammedanism, New York, The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1955, p. 6.
2. One was nationalism, although in 1929 Zwemer recognized and gave brief attention to the advent of the nationalistic spirit and the general awakening of the Muslim world. This was shortly before he retired from the foreign field. See Zwemer, Across the World of Islam, New York, Fleming H. Revell, 1929, chapters 1 and 2.

purposes of God are not being fulfilled as the Muslim has a right to expect.¹

But there has been some progress; a number of Muslim countries have gained independence, and movement in this direction continues.²

Nevertheless, Islam suffers from haunting inner uncertainties, which W. Cantwell Smith, in his book, Islam in Modern History, describes as "the fear that Islam itself even in its ideal form, even if implemented, would...be too weak in the world today."³ This exists in spite of the fact that there are about 430 million Muslims, all a part of a great brotherhood that transcends race and color, and subscribes to a common tradition and discipline. Neill underlines this further:

And yet, with all this, anxiety will not be dispelled. From end to end the Islamic world is in crisis, wrestling with new and unfamiliar political problems which drive the Muslim back on many kinds of intellectual questioning, and this in the end drives him back to look again at his religion and to ask how it can manifest itself as adequate, as he is sure that it is, to all the needs of the faithful Muslim, and ultimately to the needs of all men, in the perplexities of the modern world.⁴

The Muslim does not separate his political problems from his religion. They are both of a piece. The Islamic community is to be:

...a community totally related to God and His revelation; law, ethics, government, the habits of daily life, religion, worship--all these are covered, and the right

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1. Neill, op. cit., p. 43.
2. Ibid., pp. 43-44.
3. Ibid., p. 44.
4. Ibid., pp. 44-45.

answer to all these questions relating to them has been unalterably revealed.¹

Hence the political crises actually constitute religious ones too. As religious crises they encounter three rather conflicting solutions in Muslim thought. On the one hand the very orthodox Muslims believe that an Islamic state, such as Pakistan, should live entirely according to the tenets of Islam, with the Qur'ān as its absolute guide-book. On the other hand, the "modernists" appeal to the Islamic principle of "exercise of judgement" on the part of the Muslim community, which allows for fairly wide re-interpretation and change. A third viewpoint seeks to see Islam as it applies to individual lives in their relationship to God, rather than as a system of doctrines, forms, and practices. This is the Sufi tradition of mysticism in Islam, and it has produced thoughts and attitudes strikingly similar to Christian ones. These three applications of Islam are struggling in the minds of the Muslim world today.²

Thus Islam is in a state of crisis both from without and from within. It is basically the crisis of an awakening world, seeking to find the relevance and place of its own system as it confronts and is confronted by other systems that surround it in a complex modern world.

This is the vantage point from which Kenneth Cragg

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1. Ibid., p. 51.

2. Ibid., pp. 52-56.

writes and works today. He not only has access to studies, insights, and points of view such as those of Stephen Neill and Wilfred Cantwell Smith,¹ but he also is involved in the contemporary process of trying specifically to achieve the active sympathy and understanding that is demanded for the problems of the Muslim world. Cragg is also in a sense a product of his time. Whether or not personal inclination would have led him into his present paths of thought, the point remains that he feels that his type of approach to Islam is necessary in the light of the contemporary situation.² The world of Islam is no longer a passive, half-sleeping giant to the Western world; it is now an active force, with ideas and opinions and a will of its own, with power to make itself heard.³ Its masses are no longer isolated and totally disinterested in the rest of the world.⁴ They are becoming educated; they read; they study; they react and rebel.⁵ Thus the problem of how to treat these people, and of how to speak to them or about them, have implications which are deeper and more far-reaching than ever before, in world affairs at every level.

Cragg feels that a multitude of difficult consider-

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1. Neill and Smith have similar outlooks; see the latter's book, *Islam in Modern History*, New York, The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1959.
2. Cragg, *Sandal's at the Mosque*, p. 69. See also pp. 67-84, and *The Call of the Minaret*, chapter i.
3. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-299.
4. *Ibid.*, p. viii.
5. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, pp. 8-10.

ations are involved in today's Christian approach to Islam. They are considerations often of a highly subjective nature, in need of careful definition, for the two protagonists, Islam and Christianity, are now closely interacting in the world in almost every way.¹ The nature of these considerations will be investigated in chapter three of this thesis.

F. Summary

Samuel Zwemer came from an evangelical background, an emphasis which he maintained throughout his lifetime. Christian warmth and missionary interest pervaded his home. He was instrumental in founding a foreign missionary society, and he served as a missionary on the field for forty years, from 1890 to 1930. He was a scholar in Islamics and wrote widely on Islam and missions. Throughout his life he worked for the evangelization of the Muslims of the world.

The height of Kenneth Cragg's activity occurs about fifty years after Zwemer's beginning missionary efforts. Cragg is well-known as a Christian student of Islam, and his life has had very largely a scholastic emphasis. He has been a brilliant student, and an authoritative teacher of philosophy, Islamics, and Arabic. He has not been a missionary; at least, not in the sense that Zwemer was. Cragg is a leader in his Church, and is the head of a significant Christian study program in Islamics. He has lectured widely

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1. Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, Part 2.

around the world on Islam, and has lived for some time among Muslims. He is currently the Warden of St. Augustine's College, in England.

Zwemer's theological outlook, which was Calvinistic in nature, was related to his own personal environment and his times. The nature of God, man, and sin are such that salvation for eternal life is imperative and urgent. This eternal life has been provided through Christ's death, and can be appropriated only through belief in Christ. Hence it is the topmost duty of the Church to give the news of the Gospel to those who do not know it, such as the Muslims, so that they may have eternal life.

Cragg, whose theology is also related to his own times, stresses the redemptiveness of God, the self-centered character of sin, and the effect of regeneration upon present life. Man, though a sinner, has intrinsic dignity and worth such that God desires his fellowship in love. Salvation lifts man from self-centeredness, which is sin, to God-centeredness, in which man worships and loves God as he should. Man is remade through God's grace, which was expressed through Jesus Christ and His death on the Cross. The purpose of the Church is to worship God and to witness to the good news of man's remaking.

Islam is an extensive and fast-growing religion, being second only to Christianity in numbers. Its early history was marked by struggle and much success in conquest, though the sixteenth century saw this type of progress halted.

Some subsequent gains have since been achieved, but the total movement of Islam, especially since the 18th century, has been one of reversal. This has caused serious stresses and strains in the Islamic mind and fellowship, as Muslims try to find their place, and the proper application of their religion, in today's complex world.

Zwemer's work with Islam occurred at a time when Islam was being shaken by political collapses and Western colonization. It was also a time relatively early in the history of missionary endeavor, when evangelical conservatism was characteristic and when there was much missionary spadework to be done. Thus much of his writing is concerned simply with acquainting his readers with Islam and the just-awakening countries that embraced it. The complex, subjective elements common today were only beginning to emerge at the end of Zwemer's missionary career.

Cragg writes in a time when the Muslim world has very largely awakened into an active and reacting force in the world. He is acquainted with and tries to understand the difficulties that Muslims face in the modern world. Cragg is conscious of many aspects that need to be considered in the approach to Islam. In the complex world situation, he is also aware of the need for careful and sympathetic treatment of Islam and its people.

How all of these facts work together in producing the two approaches to Islam will be examined in the following pages.

II. SAMUEL ZWEMER'S APPROACH TO ISLAM

A. Introduction

The following pages will attempt to record the basic elements of Zwemer's approach to Islam. A preliminary word is in order here about the term "approach to Islam." An "approach" is taken in this study to mean more than just a catalogue of the acceptable or desirable mechanical methods involved in coming into contact with Muslims or the religion of Islam. It involves this as the background of a number of other things which are quite possibly more important, such as attitudes, sensitivity to feelings, and in general the whole spirit of the approach.¹ Since these things are often rather subjective, it is not always possible to make dogmatic and objective observations about them. The best that can be done is to record that the man made a certain set of statements in his life and writings, but it must be borne in mind in this connection that whether or not various writings were specifically intended as an "approach to Islam," it is still true that as published works they are ultimately available to any literate Muslim, and he will react in some way to them. Furthermore, these writings have great in-

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1. H.A.R. Gibb underlines the significance of this point in his book, Mohammedanism, p. 6.

fluence upon the whole thought patterns of aspiring "approachers" to Islam. Thus anything that Zwemer or Cragg has said in publication constitutes in the end his "approach to Islam." Hence the frequent attention given in this study to precisely what these men did say about a wide range of things pertaining to Islam.

In considering the statements made by Zwemer in his writings, it is important to note his purposes in writing. Zwemer believed that the great work of the Church in this century was the evangelization of the Muslim world.¹ Much of his writing is therefore directed toward this idea. The purpose given for the book, Islam, A Challenge to Faith, is "to present Islam as a challenge to the faith and enterprise of the Church."² This concept of a challenge is not to be overlooked, for it greatly colored Zwemer's writing.

A second purpose of Zwemer was to call attention to the Muslim lands, such as Arabia, in a time when very little was known or cared about them.³ His intention was that of objectively acquainting Christians with these places, describing the geography, the inhabitants, and their way of life in such a way as to illustrate the need of missionary

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1. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, p. 374.
2. Zwemer, Islam, A Challenge to Faith, p. viii.
3. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, p. 5.

work there.¹ This writing was done moreover in terms of Zwemer's own time, the significance of which has already been noted.

A third purpose of Zwemer's writing was to "reach the hearts"² of prospective missionaries, to inspire or compel them to go to the field, in light of the need for missionary help and the terrible condition of the Muslim world.

Reference should be made here to Zwemer's quarterly periodical, "The Moslem World." A full-scale study could be made on the basis of this magazine alone, but no such attempt is made in this thesis. Zwemer wrote a number of articles and many editorials for this journal, a few of which will be noted. It is significant to observe the vast amount of material with which Zwemer came in contact as editor, and to which he gave recognition by allowing it to be published in "The Moslem World." Zwemer's awareness and range of contacts in things Islamic was very wide, and this is to be remembered lest Zwemer be considered "provincial" because of the apparent narrowness of some of his views and perspectives. Zwemer's vantage point was not always a limited one in terms of the available information of his own day. If some of his views were more "narrow" than

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1. Note such books as Islam: A Challenge to Faith, and Arabia: The Cradle of Islam. For later examples, see bibliography for four articles on Islam in Africa and South-eastern Europe, appearing in the International Review of Missions, vols. 12, 14, 15, and 16.
2. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, p. 6:11, 12, 13.

they needed to be, it was by his own choice, and he had his reasons for it.

On the basis of the above factors, this chapter attempts to investigate Zwemer's approach to Islam from some of its widest to some of its more specific aspects.

B. The Approach as Reflected in Zwemer's Evaluation of Islam

To speak of Zwemer's "evaluation" of Islam is perhaps an elusive way in which to begin, but its importance demands early treatment, as it will do also in the case of Cragg. One's regard for or evaluation of Islam is significant¹ and affects the way in which one approaches its adherents. The problem is concerned with whether or not the terms that are real in Christianity are also real when applied to Islam, and vice versa. For whether one views Islam as basically true and real, or basically false and unreal, is very important. The issue at stake is the unique validity of total Christianity as a religion. The way in which one expresses his opinion on these matters is in itself a factor of the total approach, because of the potential Moslem audience.

1. Islam as a Whole

Samuel Zwemer's evaluation of Islam was expressed in objective and factual terms, and was outspokenly critical and condemnatory. He spoke from a conservative Christian

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1. Gibb, op. cit., p. 6.

point of view, and since Christianity was his yardstick, all other religions fell violently short in his sight. His harsh judgements were not viewed as too harsh by at least some of his contemporaries. James S. Dennis, writing the introduction to Zwemer's Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, said:

The spirit in which our author has written of Islam is marked by fairness, sobriety, and discrimination, and yet there is no mistaking the verdict of one who speaks with an authority...¹

Zwemer's own personal evaluation of Islam is given specifically in his preface to one of his early books on the general subject of Islam:

Islam, the greatest of all the non-Christian religions is not of divine origin but of human origin, altho so widely extended, and it is inadequate, in spite of much that is true and good, to meet man's needs intellectually, spiritually, or morally, as proved by its own history; therefore the present condition of Moslem lands, with their unprecedented opportunities and crises, and the work already accomplished, are a challenge² to evangelize the whole Moslem world in this generation.

Zwemer did not confine himself to his own opinions and words in expressing himself about Islam. Indeed, he used a prodigious amount of quotation from other writers on allied subjects, both in the body of his chapters and also usually as introductions to individual chapters. The way he used these quotations clearly indicated that they were illustrative and expressive of his own thoughts, so in this study they shall be referred to from time to time. One such quotation, by W. A. Essery, is characteristic of

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1. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, p. 3.
2. Zwemer, Islam, A Challenge to Faith, p. viii.

those that Zwemer often employed in presenting his own thoughts about Islam:

To conquer Mohammedanism is to capture satan's throne and I think it involves the greatest conflict Christianity has ever known. In attacking Arabia you aim at the citadel of supreme error occupied by the last enemy that shall bow the knee to the kingship of Christ.¹

Zwemer also quoted Schlegel's characterization of Islam:

A prophet without miracles; a faith without mysteries; and a morality without love; which has encouraged a thirst for blood, and² which began and ended in the most unbounded sensuality.

Zwemer's use of many such sentiments throughout his writing was expressive of his own attitude toward Islam.

Some of Zwemer's own words were no less scathing in their denunciation of this religion. Where there was not outright denunciation, there was a very consistent critical note. For instance, the uniqueness of Islam was attacked thus:

(Islam) is not an invention but a concoction; there is nothing novel about it except the genius of Mohammed in mixing old ingredients into a new panacea for human ills and forcing it down by means of the sword.³

Sometimes the criticism ran over into a note of contempt, such as this:

Islam has, it claims, a perfect revelation in the letter of the Koran, and a perfect example in the life of Mohammed.⁴ The stream has not risen higher than its sources.

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1. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, p. 374.
2. Zwemer, Islam, A Challenge to Faith, p. 84.
3. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, p. 170.
4. Ibid., p. 186.

Zwemer felt that Islam performs no good function in the world by its existence. To the idea that Islam might be a precursor of Christianity in the lives of men, he replied in the words of C.H. Scharling of Copenhagen:

It is surely altogether false, if some, in modern times, assert that Islam has a mission in this world, namely, of serving as a preparation of idolatrous nations for the faith in the one True God...Islam has never operated to prepare the way for Christianity, and least does so today.¹

In short, Zwemer viewed Islam as a religion that accomplishes nothing good, and he said so. He did, however, grant that Islam affords some elements of progress from a lower state such as animism, but even so, to no useful avail, for he also felt that:

Mohammedan progress is progress up to an impasse; it enables converts to advance a certain distance, only to check their further progress by an impassable wall of blind prejudice and ignorance.²

2. Islam's Moral, Ethical, and Social Life

Much of the content of Zwemer's books was given to descriptions of the bad conditions in Moslem lands, conditions attributable to the religion of Islam. He referred to the "easy-going moral character" of Islam as a reason for its popularity.³ He quoted a lengthy passage from Robert E. Speer, pointing up the immorality of both Islam and Moslems. It begins, "Mohammedanism is held, by many who have to live

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1. Samuel Zwemer, *The Disintegration of Islam*, New York, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1916, p. 6.
2. Zwemer, *Islam, A Challenge to Faith*, p. 130.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

under its shadow, to be the most degraded religion, morally, in the world."¹ Zwemer was equally harsh toward Moslem ethics,² and in general he regarded Islam as a system of "social bankruptcy."³ He went into much detail to describe the conditions of and the evils of polygamy, divorce, and slavery as they occurred or had occurred under Islam.⁴

3. Islam's Deity

A key element in a writer's evaluation of a religion lies in his evaluation of the god of that religion, or of God as described by that religion, whichever point of view applies. It is not extremely clear which of the two above categories Zwemer applied to Allah, the name of Islam's deity. Zwemer went to considerable length to investigate, in his book The Moslem Doctrine of God, the person and character of Allah. Near the end of the book, this summarizing statement occurs:

Is the statement of the Koran true, 'Your God and our God is the same'? In as far as Moslems are monotheists and in as far as Allah has many of the attributes of Jehovah we cannot put Him with the false gods. But neither can there be any doubt that Mohammed's conception of God is inadequate, incomplete, barren and grievously distorted. It is vastly inferior to the Christian idea of the Godhead and also inferior to the Old Testament idea of God.⁵

This does not say clearly that Allah is or is not Jehovah.

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1. Ibid., p. 118.
2. Ibid., pp. 123-125.
3. Ibid., p. 129.
4. Ibid., pp. 126-129.
5. Samuel Zwemer, The Moslem Doctrine of God, New York, American Tract Society, 1905, pp. 107-108.

However, in another place this statement is found after a description of Allah, "This is not 'the only True God' whom we know through Jesus Christ and so knowing have life-eternal."¹

Zwemer made this even stronger when he said:

...nearly all writers take for granted that the God of the Koran is the same being and has like attributes as Jehovah or the Godhead of the New Testament. Nothing could be farther from the truth.²

4. Islam's Prophet

Zwemer gave limited recognition to whatever elements of good he found in the Prophet, but this was not the major key of his discussions. Of Mohammed he said, "Whatever we may deny him we can never deny that he was a great man with great talents."³ He noted these talents in another place also, but added that Mohammed was not a self-made man, but was rather a product of favorable circumstances.⁴

Instead of enumerating the good things that Mohammed may have said or done, Zwemer concentrated on his bad points. Taking his stand against any attempts to favor the Prophet, Zwemer said, "Older writers, with whom I agree, saw in Mohammed only the skill of a clever impostor from the day of his first message to the day of his death."⁵

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1. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, p. 176.
2. Ibid., p. 171. This whole problem, more fully considered and at a much later date, is discussed in an article, "The Allah of Islam and the God Revealed in Jesus Christ," The Moslem World, XXXVI (1946), pp. 306—318.
3. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, p. 179.
4. Zwemer, A Challenge to Faith, p. 32.
5. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, p. 182.

Zwemer found little virtue in the deeds of Mohammed's life. He pointed out the fact that Mohammed broke the moral law according to the New Testament, according to the ethical and moral code of Mohammed's own day, and even according to his own teaching.¹ Zwemer disclaimed any possible analogy of Mohammed's life with that of Christ. The only observation possible in this area was that "Mohammed's biography, as given by later writers, is a palpable plagiarism and a parody on the life of our Savior, as given in the Gospels."²

Zwemer was equally outspoken on the subject of Mohammed's moral life, referring in one place to the "white-washed immorality of Mohammed."³ Zwemer gave a few incidents by way of illustration, but omitted the bulk of available information on Mohammed's moral life, because he considered it too loathsome to be written about.⁴

5. Islam's Holy Book

The Koran, the holy book or scriptures of Islam, was attacked by Zwemer on practically all points except the beauty of its language and some of its exalted expressions concerning the Deity.⁵ His general evaluation of it could be summed up in the words of Thomas Carlyle, quoted by Zwemer

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1. Ibid., p. 182.

2. Zwemer, Islam, A Challenge to Faith, p. 51.

3. Ibid., p. 81.

4. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, p. 183.

5. Ibid., pp. 188-190.

at the beginning of a chapter:

I must say, it is as toilsome reading as I ever undertook. A wearisome confused jumble, crude, incondite; endless iterations, long-windedness, entanglement; most crude, incondite; insupportable stupidity, in short. Nothing but a sense of duty could carry any European through the Koran.¹

To this Zwemer added a host of theological, moral, and ethical criticisms, leaving little good to be said for the Koran.²

6. Islam's Reform Movements

Zwemer was aware of critical changes that later began to occur in Islam, and of the movements and attempts to reform it in various ways.³ But he was not hopeful of their ultimate success in terms of Islam itself, for he felt that if Islam were to reform, it would no longer be Islam.⁴ He did not speak of these movements with any sense of approval or encouragement toward Islam itself, except in a few instances where there were indications that Western standards or attitudes were being approached. But even here he tended to credit the West for the progress made.⁵ He did not believe that Islam could work out any reformation within itself, for he felt that the whole history of Islam contradicted this possibility.⁶

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1. Zwemer, Islam, A Challenge to Faith, p. 84.
2. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, pp. 189-190.
3. Samuel Zwemer, Across the World of Islam, New York, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1929, p. 23.
4. Ibid., p. 24.
5. Ibid., chaps. V, VI. These chapters show these elements.
6. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, pp. 391-392.

Not only was Islam unreformable in Zwemer's estimation, it was furthermore a dying religion, a point to which he devoted a book, The Disintegration of Islam. In the beginning of this book he says:

Like all other non-Christian systems and philosophies Islam is a dying religion; from the outset it had in it the germs of death--neither the character of the Koran nor of its prophet have in them the promise of potency of life that will endure.¹

Zwemer felt that Moslem political collapse had been inevitable, and he predicted the same moral and spiritual results for Islam.² He regarded the crises of Islam as the Christians' opportunity for "sowing" and "harvest."³

7. Positive Evaluations

Though Zwemer's evaluation of Islam came out almost entirely on the negative side, there were a few positive comments. In addition to the linguistic beauty of the Koran, Zwemer also cited it for its "fervent trust in the One God, its lofty descriptions of His almighty power and omnipresence, and its sententious wisdom."⁴ Also, Zwemer was aware of and pointed out the fact that Islam has much to teach Christianity⁵ in the areas of devotion and daring, along with enthusiasm and fanatic (in the good sense) faith. He related stories of the ways in which Moslems faced many

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1. Zwemer, *The Disintegration of Islam*, p. 7.
2. Samuel Zwemer, "The Dying Forces of Islam," *The Moslem World*, IV (1914), p. 68.
3. Zwemer, *Across the World of Islam*, p. 31.
4. Zwemer, *Arabia, The Cradle of Islam*, p. 188.
5. Zwemer, *Islam, A Challenge to Faith*, pp. 78-81.

hardships for their faith, and battled in war on behalf of their beliefs. He noted the missionary endeavor of the Moslems and their willingness to exert individual effort. He commended them also on their spirit of reverence for their scriptures. Zwemer saw values and truths in the insights of the Sufi sect of Islam,¹ and in particular those of the man Al-Ghazali.² In yet another area, Zwemer commented on the wonderful and cheerful hospitality to be found among Moslems.³ He even found a good word for the Moslem conquests; of them he said, "In spite of cruelty, bloodshed, dissention and deceit, the story of the Moslem conquest with the sword of Jihad is full of heroism and inspiration."⁴

Thus Zwemer saw and noted some good things in Islam, even though he emphasized them so little.

C. The Approach through Confrontation

Having noted Zwemer's approach to Islam through his expressions indicating the value of Islam itself, one may now proceed to examine the actual confrontation of Islam by Christianity, as Zwemer saw it. Any approach ultimately involves a meeting of some sort, and thus it is relevant to observe how a person's concept of the approach affects the nature and conditions of this con-

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1. Ibid., p. 143.

2. Samuel Zwemer, "James Rendel Harris on Al-Ghazali," *The Moslem World*, XXXII (1942), p. 54. See also Zwemer, *A Moslem Seeker after God*, New York, Fleming Revell, 1920.

3. Zwemer, *Islam, A Challenge to Faith*, p. 109.

4. Ibid., p. 116.

frontation. First, Zwemer's view of the nature of the relationship between Christianity and Islam will be noted, since this is related to the nature of the confrontation. Then, the confrontation itself will be considered, first in terms of its character, and then in light of three aspects of actual application, namely, missions, proclamation, and service. Though such a treatment is limited in scope and detail, it will in some measure give an overall view of the factors involved in Zwemer's confrontation of Islam with Christianity.

1. Islam's Relationship to Christianity

In a sense, Zwemer indicated very slight relationship between Islam and Christianity, at least as between two religions. He made any relationship difficult by asserting, in the words of Joseph Parker, that "There are comparative religions, but Christianity is not one of them."¹ Zwemer distinguished Islam from Christianity both in essence and in teaching:

Islam is not a Christian sect or a Christian heresy. It is an eclipse of the Christ revealed in the Gospel. It is an Arabian palimpsest superinscribed over the message of Jesus by another hand. Its categorical denial of the death of Christ, of the crucifixion, of the finality of Jesus Christ as God's messenger and of His way of life through regeneration, is evident from the Koran itself.²

Zwemer also questioned the mutuality of deity in

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1. Ibid., p. vi.

2. Zwemer, *Dynamic Christianity and the World Today*, p. 152.

Christianity and Islam, as was shown in a previous section.¹ To affirm that two religions are not speaking of the same deity has implications for the nature of their relationship. In these matters Zwemer questioned whether Islam and Christianity could have any real relationship at all.

Yet in another sense Zwemer made it clear that Islam and Christianity definitely have a relationship, but not an amicable one. Zwemer made much of the way in which the Cross is a stumbling-block to Moslems,² and it may be observed that he intended to keep it such, for he said:

The Cross is the very antithesis of the spirit of Islam, because it is the spirit of Christianity. This issue must be made clear at the very outset, for it is wrapped up in every other truth of the Christian religion.³

Thus Zwemer put the spirit of Islam and the spirit of Christianity in a relationship of antagonism. This was his basic view concerning the two faiths.

The outworking of this concept of basic antagonism showed itself in Zwemer's expressions of enmity and in his ideas of battle and warfare in the relationship. An extended comment by Zwemer is of value here, for it brings out some of these things in precise terms:

Islam is proud to write on its banner, the unity of God; but it is, after all, a banner to the Unknown God. Christianity enters every land under the standard of the Holy Trinity--the Godhead of Revelation. These two banners

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1. Supra, p. 37.

2. Samuel Zwemer, *Christianity the Final Religion*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans-Sevensma Co., 1920, pp. 75ff.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

represent two armies. There is no peace between them. No parliament of religions can reconcile such fundamental and deeprooted differences. We must conquer or be vanquished. In its origin, history, present attitude and by the very first article of its brief creed, Islam is anti-Christian. But that does not mean that the battle is hopeless. Christian monotheism is as superior to Moham- edan monetheism as Christ is superior to Mohammed. There is no God but the Godhead. Islam itself is beginning to realize the strength of the Christian idea of God, and our chief prayer for the Moslem world should be that they may know¹ the Only True God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.

Thus Zwemer admitted a relationship of Islam and Christianity, but only with the understanding that Chris- tianity is superior to Islam in every way. He further stated that the two faiths confront each other as enemies, and insisted that Islam must be the one to surrender.

In spite of this premise of antagonism, Zwemer took cognizance of some positive aspects of the relationship, such as the mutual concept of theism, which he recognized as a "basis of unity."²

Moreover, though he regarded Moslems on the whole as enemies of Christianity, Zwemer felt differently about the educated class of Moslems. The reason he gave was:

There is no doubt that in social reform, policy, education and all the ideals of democracy, educated Moslems are our allies and not our enemies. They are as anxious as are the missionaries for the uplifting and enlightenment of the masses.³

Christians and Moslems could relate themselves in such in- terests, but the religious enmity between true Christians

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1. Zwemer, The Moslem Doctrine of God, pp. 119-120.
2. Zwemer, The Disintegration of Islam, p. 183.
3. Ibid., p. 197.

and true Moslems remained unalterable, for Zwemer.

2. The Confrontation of Islam and Christianity

a. Characteristics of the Confrontation

(1) The Nature and Outcome of the Confrontation

Since the nature of the relationship between these two religions was viewed as primarily antagonistic, their confrontation under Zwemer took on a corresponding nature.

It was to a large extent a confrontation of words and ideas, and because of the antagonism, it tended to be militaristic in nature. Many of Zwemer's basic thoughts are couched in military terminology.¹ He gave much attention to the tactic of controversy, and to other forms of verbal confrontation, such as proclamation.² He discussed controversy at some length, defending it as a missionary method, and supplying lists of helpful materials and aids to polemic endeavor.³ As was seen in Zwemer's openly-expressed evaluations of Islam, he went to considerable lengths in verbal attacks upon his enemy, though he encouraged circumspection in any sort of spoken presentation before Moslems.⁴

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1. Samuel Zwemer, *The Cross Above the Crescent*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1941, chapter XIII. The title of the chapter, "The Battle of the Books," and some of its contents exemplify this military spirit.
2. *Infra.* p. 54.
3. Zwemer, *Islam, A Challenge to Faith*, pp. 213-214, and insert.
4. Zwemer, *Arabia, The Cradle of Islam*, p. 379.

This type of confrontation was not confined to the Christian attack upon Islam. Zwemer sometimes called attention to Islamic attacks upon Christianity, and replied by counter-attacks. He quoted Moslem articles about Christ and God, speaking of them as "...these blasphemous articles by those who still call themselves Moslems..." and he compared them to those people in Luke's Gospel, who, "when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him saying, Prophecy who it is that smote thee."¹ Nevertheless Zwemer enjoined forgiveness on the part of Christians, for the above attack.

The Moslem-Christian meeting was not to include the helping or encouraging of Islam as a religion, in hopes of reform. Concerning the New Islam and its efforts to reform Moslem beliefs and practices, one of Zwemer's general comments was that "hybrids do not propagate,"² and this was what he expected of any type of Islam, reformed or otherwise.

The confrontation involves specific action on the part of Christianity, Zwemer felt, and he spelled out this action in narrow terms. Again and again he referred to the basic need for the evangelizing of the Moslems, as being the particular activity most appropriate for the whole situation. Hence the meeting with educated Moslems, for instance, is

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1. Zwemer, The Disintegration of Islam, pp. 216-217.
2. Ibid., p. 178.

described thus:

...we should press forward with all our might plans for the immediate evangelization of these educated classes. They are hungry for the friendship that does not patronize and the love that can forgive. They have lost faith in the old Islam and reach out to new ideals in ethics. Who can satisfy them but Christ? This is our supreme opportunity.¹

This was Zwemer's basic way of confronting the Moslem world in all its aspects. Its evangelization, its conversion, was the one thing for which he strove. All other objectives, however important, were incidental.

Zwemer felt that the Muslim-Christian meeting or confrontation was to be critical of attempts at reconciliation. At one point, Zwemer took note of a chart prepared by a Moslem, in which an attempt was made to show that Islam and Christianity have much in common. This was done by means of numerous mathematical calculations based on the number of letters in various words connected with the two faiths. Zwemer's opinion of the chart was that:

It is indicative at least of a spirit of reconciliation, although in itself it is nothing more than an arithmetical curiosity and an illustration of the vagaries of the Moslem mind."²

Beyond describing the chart, Zwemer gave no further comment.

The outcome of the confrontation of these two religions was intended by Zwemer to be the ultimate replacement of Islam by Christianity, nothing less. He noted that

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1. Ibid., p. 226.

2. Ibid., p. 176.

"Christianity has supplanted (Judaism) in all those lands where once it had a dominating influence." He continued, "May we not look forward to the same result in the case of Islam?"¹

(2) The Place of Sympathy and Understanding

In the area of sympathy and understanding, Zwemer was somewhat of an enigma, especially in the writing of his earlier missionary years.² There is no question that he loved the Moslems with his whole heart.³ Above all he wanted them to know the Savior that he knew, and he went to all lengths to make this possible. He spoke often of love and of sympathy, but it may be that these concepts must be understood in the special sense which he meant them. His love was meant at least to a large extent in the Gospel sense of loving all the human race that God created, as precious in His sight.⁴ He loved Moslems as fellow men who were sinners and condemned, and to whom he needed and wanted to bring the message of salvation. But his was a love that would not set aside necessary condemnation.⁵

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1. Ibid.

2. In the last decade of his missionary career, Zwemer recognized that world changes and missionary progress were affecting mission methods, but even though he assented to this, his basic concept of antagonism remained. See Zwemer, "How is Reconciliation Possible?" *The Moslem World*, XI (1921), p. 111.

3. Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 73.

4. Zwemer, *Evangelism Today*, pp. 58-59.

5. Samuel Zwemer, *How Rich the Harvest*, New York, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1948, p. 118.

Islam was to Zwemer an unmitigated evil, and it deserved to be trampled out in the name of Christ, battled against until every Moslem knee bowed before Christ the Lord.

This latter emphasis emerged strongly in Zwemer's approach to Islam, and the problem arises over the harsh way in which he often spoke about Moslems and their ideas. He evinced little concern for the feelings of Moslems who might read his books. With regard to missions and non-Christian religions, he lived in a world of "black and white" thinking, and he encouraged such a point of view in others.¹

It is, however, to be observed that with the passage of time Zwemer felt himself "forced to the conviction that we are facing a new era, a new day, in our relationships with Moslems." He saw the need for "sacrificial love and tactful sympathy" in winning Moslems, but he still delineated the basic dividing issues firmly and sharply.² He continued to encourage the use of boldness above tact, wherever the threat of compromise impended.³ In a brief note in *The Moslem World*, he said, "We cannot overemphasize the prime importance of love and sympathy in our work for Moslems."⁴ But he did not elaborate

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1. Zwemer, *Christianity the Final Religion*, pp. 21-26.
2. Zwemer, "How is Reconciliation Possible?" *The Moslem World*, XI (1921).
3. Zwemer, "With All Boldness," *The Moslem World*, XXVIII (1938), pp. 109-113.
4. Zwemer, "The Christian Approach to Moslems," *The Moslem World*, XIII (1923), p. 407.

extensively upon this theme.

Zwemer gave a great deal of attention to the spiritual prerequisites for such qualities as sympathy, love, and understanding, but did not discuss these qualities themselves in detail. He emphasized knowing Christ and His Gospel. Zwemer's dependence upon Christ for these necessary attitudes and personality traits was shown in the statement, "Only Christ can give largeness of heart and magnanimity of life. He is the inexhaustible fountain of tolerance and love and sympathy."¹

b. Three Aspects of the Confrontation

(1) Missions

The whole field of missions was the predominant way in which Zwemer confronted the Moslem world with Christianity. The general urgency of missions, for Zwemer, stemmed from the universality of the Gospel's meaning, and the universal need of man for its message.² But he felt that the special Gospel call to Moslems originates in the close relationship of the Arabs to "theocratic covenants and Old Testament promises."³ According to his view, the Arabs especially, and in a sense the whole Moslem world, are descendants of Ishmael, to whom a promise was given as well as to Isaac. In light of the Biblical evidences, Zwe-

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1. Zwemer, *Evangelism Today*, p. 110.
2. Zwemer, *Islam, A Challenge to Faith*, p. viii.
3. Zwemer, *Arabia, The Cradle of Islam*, pp. 398-408.

mer felt that in bringing Arabs to Christ, he was helping to fulfill the Old Testament promise given to Ishmael.¹ Indeed, the motto of the Arabian Mission when founded by Zwemer and the others was "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!"²

These factors, arising ultimately from the principles of the Great Commission,³ along with his own love for Christ and his desire to see men saved, were the driving elements in Zwemer's philosophy of missions.

Zwemer had little patience with speculation and thought that led away from the clear-cut areas of salvation and damnation, of God's love and His wrath, of truth versus lie. He appealed for the delineating of clear-cut issues even more clearly, rather than the studying of areas of mutual agreement or possible syncretism, which he regarded as out of the question.⁴ He asserted:

What we need in missions today is less comparative religion and more positive religion. It is possible to dwell upon the tolerable things in Hinduism, the ideal things of Buddhism and the noble things in Islam even as one sifts out grains of gold from tons of earth, to the practical exclusion of the social evils, the spiritual death which dominated these systems. This was not the method of the apostles.⁵

The most important element in missionary endeavor,

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1. Ibid.
2. Wilson, op. cit., p. 32.
3. Note Zwemer, "Our Evangel and Islam," *The Moslem World*, XXVI (1936), pp. 109-112.
4. Zwemer, "The Chasm," *The Moslem World*, IX (1919), p. 112.
5. Zwemer, *Christianity the Final Religion*, p. 22.

in Zwemer's opinion, was faith. His whole hope for the task of witness was based upon faith in the testimony of God's Word and in the promise of Christ's ultimate victory.¹ If there was a lack of results in some area, he considered this due to a lack of faith.² Zwemer followed the growth of missions and mission methods with a sometimes critical eye, and looked back toward old ways that seemed more dependent upon faith. Of later mission methods he said:

...today we found native churches and keep them in leading strings for half a century; we transplant elaborate and expensive systems of Western education and organization; we fail to trust a simple message and are burdened with technique and theory; we emphasize financial matters and walk not by faith but by budgets! Perhaps we should in wisdom seek the old paths and go back to the old principles.³

In describing the nature of the faith required, Zwemer again reflected the combative nature of the confrontation between Islam and Christianity. In an evaluation of the missionary problem of Arabia he said:

But Arabia, although it has all this wealth of promise, is not a field for feeble faith. Yet we can learn to look at this barren land because of these promises with the same reckless, uncalculating, defiant confidence in which Abraham...waxed strong through faith giving glory to God.⁴

This characteristic sort of faith persisted in Zwemer throughout his life, and found various expressions in his approach to Islam.

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1. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, pp. 395-398.
2. Ibid., p. 392.
3. Samuel Zwemer, Into All the World, Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1945, p. 146.
4. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, p. 407.

(2) Proclamation

One ruling factor in the confrontation of Islam with Christianity was that of direct proclamation, in Zwemer's approach. Whatever else was done, the Gospel message was to be proclaimed.

The content of the message, for Zwemer, was, in a few words, "the unsearchable riches of Christ."¹ The Christ-centered content of the proclamation was of utmost importance to him, for he said, "Preaching must have for its subject the essentials of Christianity. Preach Christ crucified."²

Zwemer also defined the content of the message as being the Cross. In this he narrows the scope of the essential proclamation still more:

There is no other way into that Kingdom than the way of the Cross. Only by the preaching of the Cross can we expect among Moslems conviction of sin, true repentance, and faith in the merits of Another.³

Zwemer felt that proclamation should be directed to the heart and conscience, rather than to the mind and intellect.⁴

Zwemer analyzed a number of possible methods for proclaiming the Gospel to Islam. His study of these reflects his primary concern with a knowledge of the message and the opportunities for presenting it, above a concern for

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1. Zwemer, Islam, A Challenge to Faith, p. 212.
2. Ibid.
3. Samuel Zwemer, "The Stumbling-Block of the Cross," The Moslem World, III (1913), pp. 157-158.
4. Zwemer, Islam, A Challenge to Faith, p. 212.

knowing the nature of the people to whom it is being presented.¹ This is underlined by the way in which Zwemer specifically enjoined against any special consideration of the nature of Moslems as a peculiar people to be specially understood apart from other types of non-Christians. He said, "Preach to the Moslem, not as a Moslem, but as to a man--as a sinner in need of a Savior."²

A revealing aspect of Zwemer's approach through proclamation is his assertion that one could discover the "right angles" for preaching, by studying the strengths and weaknesses of Islam.³ Zwemer's method was to find the enemy's weak points and hit him there, in accordance with military strategy.⁴ Thus proclamation also had for him its military aspects.

Zwemer indicated that proclamation can be carried out not only by words, but also by deeds. This will be elaborated in the section below on "Service." But the need and suitability of service notwithstanding, Zwemer's emphasis remained on proclamation:

In the present conditions and opportunities that confront the Church of God throughout the whole Moslem world we face a new and grave responsibility. It can only be met by the outpouring of life in loving service, by sacrificial obedience to that last command of our Savior's, and by the immediate, sympathetic, tactful but also fearless and direct proclamation of the Gospel by word and by deed everywhere.⁵

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Zwemer, The Disintegration of Islam, p. 29.
5. Ibid., p. 227.

(3) Service

Zwemer gave much attention to the possibilities for Christian service to the Moslem world, but only insofar as it would assist the ultimate task, which was the proclamation of the Gospel and the winning of converts. Though he was very compassionate toward human need, he saw all need in terms of what he believed to be the real need, the need for the Gospel and for salvation through Christ.¹

Zwemer was acutely aware of the needs of the Moslem lands, and he enumerated them in some detail in his books. He noted the very bad social conditions, health problems, illiteracy, and other difficulties.² He felt that the greatest material need was medical, in terms of service that could be rendered by missionary effort. But this judgment again was in part dictated by the fact that medical work was the most effective and practical in Moslem lands, especially for beginning efforts at bringing in the Gospel. Schools and other educational facilities he considered necessary and desirable, but these too were "only a means to an end."⁴

In his book Thinking Missions with Christ, Zwemer's twelfth chapter is entitled "The Other-Worldliness of the

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1. Samuel Zwemer, "The Intolerance of Christianity," The Moslem World, I (1911), p. 98.
2. Zwemer, Islam, A Challenge to Faith, p. 173ff.
3. Zwemer, Arabia, The Cradle of Islam, p. 383.
4. Zwemer, Islam, A Challenge to Faith, p. 211.

Missionary Enterprise." Both the title and contents of the chapter reflect an emphasis in Zwemer that is significant in his ideas on service, and indeed on his whole concept of Christian witness to Islam. What he said in this chapter is, basically, that "The aim and goal of the missionary enterprise is not of the earth and earthly."¹ He noted that:

All of the older missionary heroes, Judson, Carey, Livingstone, Martyn, Hudson Taylor, lived for eternity and preached for eternity, a Gospel that was other-worldly. They went out to save the lost. Yet their social Gospel included works of mercy to all with whom they came in contact. They had their schools, hospitals, and asylums; they were not unmindful of social evils and worked for social reforms. But they considered all these as means to an end.²

Zwemer carried the thought still farther in quoting from and commending a "memorial" brought by a group of delegates to the 1932 meeting of the International Missionary Council. This statement expressed anxiety over the increasing interest of the Church in "Making programs for the solution of rural, social and industrial problems in the various mission fields."³ The delegates expressed the conviction that:

...our missionary task is to proclaim in word and life God's revelation and redemption in Jesus Christ. We have no other task; for while there is much that is useful and good, 'one thing is needful.' We need to ask ourselves whether everything that forms part of present missionary activity serves the one dominant purpose of making clear the message of Jesus Christ in all its fulness.⁴

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1. Samuel Zwemer, *Thinking Missions with Christ*, 2nd ed., Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1934, p. 135.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

These statements, along with other material, were both quoted and endorsed by Zwemer at the end of the book. The approach through service is one which Zwemer commended, although he relegated it to a significantly clear-cut second position in the confrontation with non-Christian religions, such as Islam.

D. Summary

This chapter has been an attempt to survey Zwemer's approach to Islam in terms of the way in which he expressed his evaluation of it, and in terms of his view of the actual confrontation of Islam by Christianity.

Zwemer's evaluations of Islam, which are accessible to any literate Moslem, were outspokenly critical, in general. He used uncomplimentary and sometimes contemptuous expressions in describing this religion, and he accorded it no good place in the world scheme of things. He pointed up primarily the bad aspects of life under Islam. The mutuality of deity in Islam and Christianity was questioned by Zwemer. Though noting a few favorable things about Islam's Prophet, Zwemer spoke of him generally as false, evil, and crude, and declared Mohammed's Holy Book and his concept of God to be defective and inferior to those of Christianity. Zwemer was critical, unencouraging, and unhopeful toward reform movements in Islam. In a few matters Zwemer made some positive statements about Islam, but emphasized them very little. Thus in terms of his expressed evaluation of Islam, Zwemer's approach openly laid before all readers

his low opinion of this religion.

Concerning the confrontation of Christianity and Islam, Zwemer's view of this was affected by the fact that on one hand he granted them little common ground at all, and on the other hand their relationship was considered basically an antagonistic one, with Islam completely and unalterably opposed to Christianity. This antagonism characterized to a significant extent the confrontation in Zwemer's approach. Such elements as controversy, mutual attack and counter-attack, and militant evangelism were discussed and used. Reconciliation was not sought, unless it meant the replacement of Islam by Christianity.

Though Zwemer had sympathy, love, and understanding in himself, and encouraged such qualities in others, his earlier writings in many ways did not reflect these characteristics. The outworking of the antagonistic relationship always tended to predominate, though in later years in a mellowed form. He maintained the distinctions between the two religions, and looked to Christ to supply the Christian qualities needed for approaching Islam.

Zwemer confronted Islam very largely on a missionary basis, which he saw as urgent and Biblically-based. He emphasized positive Christianity in missions, rather than the approach through comparative religion. He felt that the success or failure of mission enterprise depended upon the degree of faith applied to the project.

Christ-centered and Cross-centered proclamation

was another aspect of Zwemer's confrontation with Islam. He emphasized a knowledge of the message more than a knowledge of the hearers. For Zwemer, proclamation had a militant nature, and was of utmost importance.

Zwemer was cognizant of and concerned about opportunities for service, but considered service to be a means to an end, and definitely in second place to the delivery of the message of Christ.

III. KENNETH CRAGG'S APPROACH TO ISLAM

A. Introduction

For the governing principles involved in the treatment of the material in this chapter, the reader is referred to the first paragraph of the introduction to Chapter II, on pages 30-31.

Since the purposes of an author are of significance in a study of his writings, notice is taken here of some of the purposes that Dr. Cragg has expressed for the things he has written. Perhaps the most inclusive of such statements occurs in these words:

There is...a great need for a discerning Christian trusteeship of Christ which can undertake an irenic and yet loyal witness to the meaning of the Gospel, without capitulating either to easy neglect of truth or to assertive and alienating advocacy of it.¹

In The Call of the Minaret, frequently used and quoted in the following pages, Cragg begins with this Muslim call, the Islamic creed, and says that his purpose is "To seek in it the clue to Islam, and from that clue to learn the form and dimensions of Christian relation to what it tells..."²

He says further that the book is:

...one man's effort after an interpretative study of what the muezzin says, an effort inspired by the obligations belonging to Christian conviction--obligations, that is, of awareness, witness, and concern.³

1. Cragg, Sandals at the Mosque, p. 11.
2. Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, p. viii.
3. Ibid.

The purpose of Sandals at the Mosque is expressed as an effort to contemplate the "broadest outlines" of an "outward and relational" Christian theology, "in special relation to Islam."¹

B. The Approach as Reflected in Cragg's Evaluation of Islam

This section treats its subject matter in much the same way as the corresponding section on Zwemer.²

1. Islam as a Whole

In the book Sandals at the Mosque, Cragg in the beginning lays the groundwork for the rest of the book through an examination of a mosque sermon. He leads the reader into the mosque, and bids him pay close attention to all that transpires there. The reader figuratively takes his shoes off, just as Muslims also leave their sandals at the door of their place of worship.³ Stephen Neill gives insight into Cragg's meaning and purpose in thus approaching Islam:

...Canon Kenneth Cragg, has called one of his books Sandals at the Mosque. In the East you enter a temple, a mosque, or a church barefoot. Canon Cragg is teaching us that, unless we approach that which to others is holy, even though it may not in the same sense be holy to us, in that spirit of humility and reverence,⁴ we shall find all the doors barred and bolted against us.

This basic attitude of respect and reverence for things

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1. Cragg, Sandals at the Mosque, p. 21.
2. *Supra*, p. 33, has introductory comments, which apply here.
3. Cragg, Sandals at the Mosque, p. 26.
4. Neill, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

Islamic is to be observed throughout Cragg's writings.

Cragg's method of evaluating Islam is strongly positive, as he shows by pointing out wherever he can the strengths and the good points of Islam. This is a consistent characteristic of his writing, with the exception of some mild criticism at a few points. Cragg does this intentionally, for he feels that the various faiths are not to be judged by their weaknesses as shown in their compromises. Rather, he says, one should "assess the lights more than the shadows."¹

Cragg indicates that Islam does have a valid contribution to make to the sum of man's spiritual and religious understanding. Speaking in terms of all religions, which includes Islam, he says that "no self-respecting religious expression can evade its duty to demonstrate the meaning of its conviction about God and men and nations in the dilemma humanity confronts."² Speaking directly of Islam, he says that "the Muezzin³...invites men to a relationship with God and to an attitude toward his fellows."⁴ Islam, he feels, does have something to say about men and about God.

Cragg does not speak of Islam as something to be destroyed, or that deserves destruction. In fact, in discussing the Sufis, a sect of Islam, he praises their insights and remarks that they have from time to time been the

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1. Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, p. 66.

2. Ibid., p. 180.

3. The Muslim "priest" who gives the call from the minaret.

4. Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, p. 184.

"salvation" of Islam, giving them, as it were, credit for saving Islam.¹

2. Islam's Moral, Ethical, and Social Life

Cragg feels that Islam can have a positive effect on human character. He commends Islam for the "sense of God's Oneness," an insight that he says brings out dignity and loyalty in men, along with other favorable social qualities, such as hospitality and a sense of responsibility. These characteristics are noted as the "moral consequences of the recognition of God."²

In comparison to other religions, besides Christianity, Islam is described as having favorable effects. In discussing the impact of Islam upon the pagans and animists of Africa, Cragg notes that Islam "recreates their entire existence."³ Thus Cragg speaks of Islam as a valid entity having inherent capacities for good, and indeed actually productive of good.

3. Islam's Deity

It has already been noted that the evaluation of the deity of a religion is of significance in the way of dealing with that religion. Cragg, in speaking again of the Sufi sect, says that it has manifested "sensitivity of soul

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1. Ibid., p. 136.

2. Ibid., p. 67.

3. Ibid., p. 193.

to God, life, and eternity."¹ He is speaking here of Muslims, and their relationship to their deity, whom they call Allah. However, in referring to this deity, Cragg uses the term "God." This is the same term he uses for the deity of the Christians, and he makes no extra distinction or specification as he uses the term in reference to both Islam and Christianity.² Cragg does not distinguish between "Allah" and "Jahweh," and he maintains that there is no distinction to be made. Cragg asserts that if people agree that God is, then they are necessarily speaking of the same Being, though they may have different ideas of His characteristics.³ Thus under whatever terms they speak of God, the Muslims and Christians speak of the same Being, for they do not differ radically "within the very concept of existence itself as applied to God."⁴

In terms of evaluation of Islam, then, Cragg believes that the Muslim relationship to Allah is also a relationship to Jahweh, or to the True God of the Christians. This has significance for the value of Islam as a religion, as a way to God or through which God reveals Himself, and reveals Truth. Indeed, Cragg speaks of the reality of Muhammad and of Islam as something which is "God-given."⁵ Again, Cragg does not qualify the term "God" to indicate any

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1. Ibid., p. 136.

2. This is very evident in *The Call of the Minaret*, chap. ii.

3. Ibid., p. 36.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 79.

other than the True God as Christians know Him.

4. Islam's Prophet

Since the prophet Muhammad is so much a part of Islam, Cragg's evaluation of him is significant. In overall approach, Cragg expresses agreement with the statement of Carlyle:

Our current hypothesis about Mahomet, that he was a scheming impostor, a Falsehood Incarnate, that his religion is a mere mass of quackery and fatuity, begins really to be now untenable to anyone.¹

Cragg, by and large, gives Muhammad a favorable treatment. He does raise the question of just how one should view the life and work of Muhammad, but he does not attack Muhammad's character. Cragg feels that too much has been made of details of the Prophet's life, and that in so doing "the ultimate" is missed. He does note that in connection with Muhammad, any reference to the "hills of Galilee and Judea" involve "criteria of almost insupportable contrast."²

Cragg expresses his positive evaluation of Muhammad in several ways. In relation to the difficulties that Muhammad faced, Cragg characterizes him thus:

Bearing the brunt of that opposition in single-minded devotion, Muhammad the preacher is a person whose nobility reaches us through the intervening years.

He summarizes the later life of the Prophet in the following

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1. Ibid., p. 187.
2. Ibid., p. 92.
3. Ibid., p. 94.

words:

Worn by two and a half decades of intense, emotional and spiritual stress, as recipient of the Quran, as leader, ruler, legislator and nerve-center of a new and vibrant politico-religious entity, he seems to have sensed the approaching end.¹

Such expressions of positive recognition and restrained criticism are characteristic of Cragg's treatment of Muhammad.

5. Islam's Holy Book

Cragg has a similar approach to the revelations which Muhammad is purported to have received, which now comprise the Quran. Cragg acknowledges a "deep inward mystery"² concerning these revelations, but does not refer to them as false. In his references to the Quran, he treats it as being a real religious expression. In one place he discusses the Quran in terms of trying to understand how it might have occurred that actual Divine revelation did take place in the Quran.³ He expresses the hope that such might actually someday prove to have been the case when he says, "Shall the Christian reader not yearn then that the Quran did not disqualify with plural idols that wherein the One God is supremely at work."⁴

Thus Cragg follows through by seeking the valid

.

1. Ibid., p. 90.

2. Ibid., p. 79.

3. Kenneth Cragg, "The Quran and the Christian Reader," *The Muslim World*, XLVI (1956), p. 68.

4. Ibid., p. 66.

and the positive in the Quran.

6. Islam's Reform Movements

Cragg, as has already been indicated, is aware of movements and efforts within Islam and the Muslim world to achieve various kinds of reform. His general approach is to greet such endeavors with encouraging recognition, and to look expectantly for further such developments in the Muslim world. He says that "the attitude which writes off the Arab world as miserably recalcitrant, divided and supine, is politically malicious and spiritually bankrupt."¹ He points out that "there are many evidences of yearning, self-criticism, cooperation and potential constructiveness."² Islam is concerned about the things in which it has been delinquent, and it seeks to express itself more truly. Cragg characteristically calls attention to the good things in Islam, for he believes that it is not fair to characterize Islam by its bad features.³ Nor should those bad features be expected to remain unchanged, for "The Church, properly aware of itself, has no vested interest in other systems being static or unreformed."⁴ The Christian is rather to recognize that:

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1. Kenneth Cragg, "The Arab World and the Christian Debt," *International Review of Missions*, XLII (1953), p. 159.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Kenneth Cragg, "Hearing by the Word of God," *International Review of Missions*, XLVI (1957), pp. 246-247.
4. Kenneth Cragg, "West African Catechism," *The Muslim World*, XLVIII (1958), p. 243.

...at least new roads to a new future are being pioneered in the Arab world which the Christian greets with hopefulness and prayer and to which he must ever strive to communicate the glorious relevance of Christ.¹

C. The Approach through Confrontation

In a number of ways, Cragg stresses the importance of actual confrontation. The relationship between Islam and Christianity should be one of encounter in religious fellowship;² the fact of actual meeting must be involved, for Cragg notes that meeting is the basic intent of the mosque.³ It calls the Muslim to meet with Muslims and with God; because of the nature of Christianity, Christians are also called to this place of meeting. Cragg believes that the mosque's call to meeting applies to men of both faiths.⁴

1. Islam's Relation to Christianity

Cragg's emphasis concerning the relationship between Islam and Christianity is that a real relationship does exist. He points out that these religions are the two dominant faiths in a world that is currently sensitive to disunity.⁵ Thus the relationship between Islam and Christianity may be conceived of as being in the interests of

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1. Cragg, "The Arab World and the Christian Debt," op. cit, p. 156.
2. Ibid., p. 159.
3. Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, p. 176-177.
4. Ibid., p. 177.
5. Ibid., p. 180.

world unity. But more important, there exists, according to Cragg, a "mutuality of significance" between Islam and Christianity.¹ Both are significant in the world, though Cragg does not specify whether they are equally so. By asserting a relationship in terms of world situation and mutual significance, Cragg leads into the fact that the relationship is of an integral and unavoidable nature.

The necessity and unavoidability of the relationship stems from several factors. The technology of modern travel and communication is in part responsible, for it has forced these religions into a real proximity never before experienced. They are now physically related, and therefore mutually involved in many areas.² Also, if they are to be true to their very natures, Islam and Christianity cannot exclude themselves from one another.³ Thus Christianity and Islam are forced into a relationship on both external and internal bases.

Cragg lays the emphasis on the latter of these two, however, by saying that:

The meeting of faiths is not to be seen as a prudent conformity to external necessity. It is rather the obligation of their nature and their ancient sense of the metaphysical oneness of humanity.⁴

If Islam is to be true to itself, it must reach out into

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1. Ibid., p. 177.
2. Ibid., p. 181.
3. Ibid., p. 177.
4. Ibid., p. 181.

Christendom, and Christianity, in order to be true to Christ, must extend itself into the "place of Muslim assembly, to the home of the Muslim soul."¹ Cragg's feeling concerning a relationship between Islam and Christianity is, in short, "away with the thought that it is improper to bring them together."²

Cragg further pursues this necessity of relationship on other grounds in addition to the above-mentioned ones. He believes that Islam "deserves"³ understanding, and this understanding or interest should be deeper than the typical political and secular relationships that are commonly pursued among nations.⁴ On the other hand, Muslims also ought to be interested in Christianity, at least in that it is the religion which theirs has superseded.⁵ The lack of Muslim investigation of Christianity leads Cragg to emphasize the need for Islam to study and understand Christianity with some of the same intensity and thoroughness that Christian scholars have given to Islamics. Cragg realizes, however, that such an interest must be spurred on by a Muslim, and by genuine Muslim concern.⁶

His concern for Muslim interest and scholarship in Christianity is reflected in his translating the book

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1. Ibid., p. 182.

2. Ibid., p. 184.

3. Ibid., p. 34.

4. Ibid., p. 174.

5. Ibid., p. 178.

6. Kenneth Cragg, "Each Other's Face," *The Muslim World*, XLV (1955), pp. 172-182.

City of Wrong from the Arabic. In his introduction to the book, Cragg says, "The fascination of this book is that this theme has here been sensitively explored and presented, probably for the first time, by a thinker from within the faith of Islam."¹

Cragg acknowledges the fact of present bad relationships between the two religions. This began in a sense, he says, at the inception of Islam, when the chief concern was the overthrow and removal of any form of idolatry from religion. The "sons and daughters" of Allah were dethroned and done away with to this end, along with the multitude of other pagan deities and idols of Arabia at that time. The "tragedy," as Cragg calls it, is that this worthwhile emphasis toward the unity of God also came to bear destructively upon any notion of the "son" of God. Hence Christ by this title cannot be legitimately conceived of by Muslims.²

Another large area of unfortunate relationship between Islam and Christianity is the residue of resentment, mostly on the part of the Muslims, that originated because of the Crusades.³

However, Cragg's chief assertion and emphasis is that the situation is by no means entirely that of bad

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1. M. Kamel Hussein, City of Wrong, trans. by Kenneth Cragg, London, Geoffrey Bles, 1959, p. IX.
2. Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, p. 38.
3. Ibid., pp. 265-267.

relationship. He feels that there are "wide areas of positive mutuality which it is a joy to explore and enlarge."¹ The basic elements of Christianity "necessarily" recur in some way in the various faiths of the world, so the Christian has no difficulty in finding at least some areas of positive relevance between his own and another faith.²

Cragg repeatedly calls attention to the difficult extremes to which one must go in pursuing this relationship, if one wishes to approach Islam. The attempt at relationship has to be a very wholehearted thing:

It needs to take with a more objective seriousness the concepts within the summons, to go deeper than interest, prudence, or policy into areas of spiritual communication.³

2. The Confrontation of Islam and Christianity

a. The Character of the Confrontation

(1) The Nature and Outcome of the Confrontation

An important element of the Muslim-Christian confrontation is a "will to positive relationships."⁴ Cragg notes that there are several bases for negative relationships, but he prefers to dwell upon the positive matters. Cragg is ever on guard to state the facts of Islam truthfully, but at the same time he stresses the need for gentleness and humility,⁵ along with understanding⁶

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1. Ibid., p. 179.

2. Ibid., p. 183.

3. Ibid., p. 175.

4. Ibid., p. 34.

5. Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, pp. 85-96.

6. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, pp. 186-209.

and patience.¹ Where truthfulness does not allow him to employ these qualities, he tends simply to omit that subject if possible, as he does with the morality of Muhammad's life.² Cragg's concern in this area is well illustrated by his remark introducing a discussion of Muhammad's military activities, "To set forth this period in the Prophet's career objectively, without offending modern Muslim susceptibilities, is difficult in the extreme."³ Though Cragg is very uncritical of Islam in his own direct statements, he does note some critical comments by others, without indicating agreement with them, however. For instance, he notes criticism of the mosque sermon,⁴ but does not comment upon it. He avoids criticism almost entirely in a discussion of Muslim marriage patterns.⁵

But it is not to be thought that Cragg is blindly uncritical. He is concerned with truth as well as with attitude, for he says, "If we must reproach, it should be with understanding: if we would minister, it should be with truth."⁶ In the above remark pertaining to Muhammad's military activities, there is implied reference to something unpleasant. In further discussing the military career of the Prophet, an area in which Cragg ventures several

.

1. Ibid., pp. 333-357.

2. Ibid., p. 69.

3. Ibid., p. 84.

4. Ibid., p. 126.

5. Ibid., pp. 167-169.

6. Cragg, "The Arab World and the Christian Debt," op. cit., p. 154.

criticisms, he describes one section of the war as "deliberate if intermittent."¹ Concerning the Banū Quraizah massacre,² Cragg again restrains direct criticism of Muhammad, and goes on to point out the basic practical necessity of the act from the Prophet's point of view.³ Yet Cragg's real assessment of the incident does come out when he says that it "marks the darkest depths of Muslim policy, a depth which the palliatives suggested by some modern Muslim historians quite fail to measure."⁴ In another place Cragg speaks of the "mingled magnanimity and opportunism" that characterized Muhammad during a certain period of his life.⁵

Nor is Cragg unaware of differences between Islam and Christianity. Cragg's approach, however, is to "transcend" the harshness of the way in which Islam differs with Christianity concerning such matters as the Cross and the deity of Christ, for much of this harshness is "well intentioned."⁶ These antagonisms, where they exist, are to be taken by the Christian as opportunities for meaningful confrontation.⁷

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1. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 84.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 87. "The whole tribe was dispossessed and after suing for clemency, the women and children were enslaved, while the men, traditionally numbered at seven hundred, were executed beside long trench graves in a day of signal terror."
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
7. *Ibid.*

That which is to take place at all confrontation of Islam and Christianity is communication, for "Communication is the supreme context in which all theology of the relation between the Christian faith and the non-Christian world must be set."¹ Communication is the essence of our faithfulness to the task for "Communication must dominate or... we have abandoned the Word."²

Throughout Cragg's writing are scattered a multitude of questions, rhetorical and real, and addressed to both Muslims and Christians, separately and together. Cragg would have them asking one another serious and profound questions, and studying together for the answers. If each group could be persuaded to question itself sincerely with regard to the other, and if they together would seek the questions and answers relating to their common existence, then, Cragg feels, proper and fruitful confrontation would be occurring.³

If the confrontation is to be one that is genuine and complete, it has to be honest and deep, and it has to be free of any "vitiating motives."⁴ Cragg exclaims at one point, for example, "Away with the Muslim suspicion that the Christian could only take cognizance of the mosque like some conspirator spying out the enemy terrain."⁵

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1. Cragg, "Hearing by the Word of God," op. cit., p. 241.
2. Ibid., 249.
3. Cragg, "Each Other's Face," op. cit., pp. 172-182.
4. Ibid., p. 179.
5. Ibid., p. 184.

Cragg has very different motives. In The Call of the Minaret there are long passages, often in the first person, in which he tries to interpret Islamic beliefs and feelings. He considers Islam in terms of itself--its own call, its own ideas, its own words, simply attempting to feel and understand what it is to be a Muslim,¹ "...because we seek to know (Islam) as far as may be, from within."² This concept of the confrontation from within is very predominant in Cragg's approach.

The ultimate outcome of the confrontation hoped for by Cragg is the Christian discipleship of Muslims. But he expresses this idea in a particular way:

It is important, therefore, to help the Muslim world to conceive of the Christian mission not as depredatory but as constructive. It is true that it seeks to make disciples, since discipleship is what Christ intends and claims. A Christian mission that renounces the making of Christians has forsaken both its genius and its duty. ...But such discipleship is not Western "aggression"; it is not religious competition. The faith that offers is not truly regarded as a rival. The truth is not rivalry but relevance. What Christ and what, therefore, the Christian mission hold in trust is profoundly meaningful to the whole life, aspiration, and humanity of the Muslim world. The herald wants only that it be available.³

(2) The Place of Understanding and Sympathy

A strong characteristic of Cragg's approach to Islam is described in one place simply as "the

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1. Ibid., pp. 34, 188.
2. Ibid., p. 34.
3. Ibid., p. 355.

will to understanding."¹ Cragg spends a whole section of his book just on the matter of understanding the Muslim. The understanding involves "an openness of soul and sensitivity to all that is deepest in our fellows."²

The need for understanding arises from objective contemporary situations. Attitudes in the Muslim world indicate a hunger on the part of Muslims to be understood and recognized.³

The Arab countries are, among other things, in a "spiritual quandary that deserves our imagination and understanding."⁴ This is important because it is through showing them the understanding they need that an understanding attitude on their part may be obtained.⁵ However, Cragg makes it clear that this quality does not come easily, for "the student must be ready to pay in diligence the price of understanding."⁶ Cragg makes very frequent reference to a basic element in the process of understanding. This element is the concept of "entering into," also expressed by a number of other phrases. Cragg demonstrates the Biblical grounds for this principle and its purpose by pointing out that it is the same principle that God employed in Jesus Christ.⁷

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1. Ibid., p. 188.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Cragg, "The Arab World and the Christian Debt," op. cit., p. 152.

5. Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, pp. 188-189.

6. Ibid., p. 72.

7. Cragg, "Hearing by the Word of God," op. cit., p. 251.

This concept has many facets in Cragg's discussion. A few of these are illuminated when he says that "It is imperative that we strive to think ourselves into the interior life of Islam and to appreciate the inwardness of its external problems,"¹ and when he tells the Christian that he "must strive to enter into the daily existence of the Muslims, as believers, adherents, and men."² Cragg points up his hope of helping the reader to do just this, in his prefatory remarks to two translations of Muslim prayers used during the "blessed month" of Ramadan,³ and during the Pilgrimage.⁴

Cragg's "will to positive relationships" comes into play as he studies the various elements of Islam and seeks to understand them. For instance, in discussing the Muslim marriage relationship, he frankly admits that he has purposely avoided discussing the problems and evils fostered by polygamy and the harem system, because "we have been at pains to understand the good of the minaret's call...."⁵ Indeed, whenever one finds elements of Islam that are strange and repugnant, Cragg cautions that "it is well for the outside observer to look with understanding, even where he quite fails to penetrate the secret."⁶

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1. Ibid., p. 198.

2. Ibid., p. 189.

3. Kenneth Cragg, "Ramadan Prayers," *The Muslim World*, XLVII (1957), p. 210.

4. Kenneth Cragg, "Pilgrimage Prayers," *The Muslim World*, XLV (1955), p. 269.

5. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 169.

6. Ibid., p. 121.

In his discussions of the political and geographical problems of the Muslim world, Cragg frequently enjoins both understanding and sympathy upon the Christian.¹ One must have sympathy for the problems of the newly-born Muslim nationalism.² He calls particularly for such sympathy in the case of Arab refugees from Israel, and for the whole political situation in that area.³ He looks not for ordinary sympathy, but for a "strenuous kind of sympathy."⁴

In such ways the factors of understanding and sympathy are prominent in Cragg's approach to Islam.

b. Aspects of the Confrontation

(1) Mission

Cragg believes that the Christian mission "takes its rise from the nature of the Gospel."⁵ Christians are sent because Christ came among us.⁶ Cragg notes the question of whether or not it is a sort of egoism for Christianity to put itself forward so confidently as it does. His answer is that "the abeyance of mission... would be the supremely damnable egoism..." Not only is it

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1. Cragg, "The Arab World and the Christian Debt," op. cit., pp. 151-161.
2. Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, pp. 195-196.
3. Ibid.;
4. Cragg, "The Arab World and the Christian Debt," op. cit., p. 158.
5. Cragg, The Call of the Minaret, p. 182.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

not egotistical to press upon others the claims of Christ, but the egotism would be far greater if it were attempted to keep this universal Christ privately to oneself.

The world's need for the Gospel emerges in part from Cragg's view of Christianity as a vital force in the activities of the world, "for the Christian mission and all its intellectual and spiritual corollaries are no idle pursuit, isolated from the realities of contemporary life."¹ Christianity "relates itself vigorously," says Cragg, to the "urgent practical issues...the major issues attaching to oneworldness in our day."² Cragg frequently discusses such current matters as Islamic nationalism, and the ways in which the Church relates itself to the problems and feelings that such nationalism creates.³

Concerning the aim of mission, Cragg notes and accepts the criticism of M.A.C. Warren, given at the Wil-lingen Conference in 1952, that:

Our theology of missions has been much too concerned with the rescue of souls and the floating of little arks of salvation, and all too little with the assertion of the Crown Rights of the Redeemer in all parts of His Dominion.⁴

Cragg himself asserts the nature of the Christian mission in these terms:

The amazing reality behind and within the Christian mission in the world is this task of interpretation.

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1. Ibid., p. 189.

2. Ibid.

3. Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, pp. 82-85.

4. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 213.

Our duty is to carry over the Word which God has uttered, to be the translators of His speech into the language, the idiom, and the minds of ordinary men.¹

Cragg devotes his long chapter on interpretation to explaining the main areas that the Christian's interpretation to Islam must cover. They are "the Christian Scripture, the Person of Jesus, the Cross, the Christian Doctrine of God, and the Christian Church and a Christian society."²

Ultimately the whole thrust of the Church's mission to Islam has to do with Christ, and particularly with what Cragg calls His "discredit" as it occurs in Islam, for:

All the theological obligations of the Christian Church towards Islam centre round the person of our Lord. Our task is to enable Muslims to recover His identity. When we consider it, how sadly attenuated is the figure of the Christ as Islam knows Him. Absent are the crowning features. Only a few parabolic sayings are preserved and traditions about a homeless wanderer, who had not where to lay His head. But the reason³ for His homelessness, and its intensity, go all unsuspected.

(2) Proclamation

Cragg gives every indication that proclamation is to be continued and pursued. He says that if Christianity were to cease to preach, it would fail its "deepest trust."⁴ Indeed, preaching is not to be given up even under pressure, such as might result from the accusation

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1. Ibid., p. 273.

2. Ibid., p. 275.

3. Kenneth Cragg, "The Christian Church and Islam Today," *The Muslim World*, XLII (1952), p. 286.

4. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 212.

that Christian service is being used simply as the vehicle of Christian propaganda.¹

A very important emphasis in proclamation is indicated by the fact that Cragg gives his longest chapter to it, under the title, "The Call to Interpretation."² This is significant for proclamation, for he says that preaching is interpretative,³ and that "the valid Christianity is the interpretative Christianity."⁴ Cragg brings this emphasis on interpretation to bear on proclamation when he says that the message "must be intelligible to man, otherwise no meaning is conveyed and the speech, if it is spoken, is nevertheless not heard."⁵ God's message must reach man meaningfully, or proclamation has not taken place, for "meanings not conveyed are meanings frustrated."⁶ The simple presentation of facts is not the full extent of proclamation's duty:

Our business in Christ's trusteeship is not merely to present facts, but to travail until Christ be formed in the hearts of men and until an understanding of His meanings conceives and grows within their souls.

Cragg relates this to the special attention he gives to understanding and entering into the life, thoughts, and nature of Muslims, when he says that "...every wise

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., pp. 271-332.
3. Ibid., p. 213.
4. Ibid., p. 179.
5. Ibid., p. 272.
6. Ibid., p. 273.
7. Cragg, "Hearing by the Word of God," op. cit., p. 241.

translator...will be indefatigable in seeking his clues in every area of life."¹

The matter of form of expression in proclamation is also important to Cragg. All communication with Muslims, including preaching, must discard its English and Western characteristics, if any. He says that Christ is universal, and if preaching retains its English or Western character, it will not be presenting the universal Christ.²

(3) Service

The need for service to Muslims is emphasized by Cragg, for he sees it as a pressing call to the Christian. It is simply on this basis:

The ills and sorrows of human existence will for several generations weigh more heavily upon the Eastern world than upon the comfort-cushioned civilization of the West. And that for the Christian is call enough.³

Cragg goes into considerable detail to spell out the nature of the various needs throughout the Muslim world, and the way in which the Church can relate itself to them. He points out the need for service in the light of world conditions such as excessive population, child mortality, poverty, insecurity, sewage disposal problems, diseases, housing, congestion, lack of food and sanitation, inadequate public health measures, irrigation problems, and

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1. Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 274.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 217.

research needs.¹ Cragg regards these as legitimate areas for Christian concern and endeavor where possible.

Cragg feels that service is an appropriate way in which to fulfill the Church's ultimate task. He sees service as another way of presenting the Gospel, "In service the Gospel is implicit; in preaching it is explicit. They are the illustrative and the interpretative in the labor of the missionary Church."²

Cragg indicates a working balance between the two approaches. By way of stating this he says that salvation must be understood "so as to forbid an idea of welfare that takes no account of forgiveness or a concept of redemption that excludes the here and now."³ One should not serve without attempting to save, nor should one attempt to save without also caring for the person's immediate needs. On the other hand, Cragg suggests that the service one performs should be isolated as much as possible from one's "urge to baptize."⁴ He is not saying that one should not preach or baptize in connection with service, but rather that one should not allow service to become a source of inducement or pressure upon people to hear or to receive the message.⁵

The basic motivation to Christian service is one's

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1. Ibid., pp. 217-219, 225-229.
2. Ibid., p. 213.
3. Ibid., p. 210.
4. Ibid., p. 213.
5. Ibid.

discipleship to Christ, which by its nature obligates one to serve those in need.¹ The Christian's intent toward men's salvation also leads to the same obligation:

...the Christian in his realm of ministry learns to hearken to the silent eloquence of human need, to the low whisper of its wide appeal. Salvation is a big word with which to answer. But no smaller work will suffice... And thoughts that intend salvation turn thereby into deeds.²

The very fact that one is concerned about the salvation of Muslims means that he must enter upon Christian service. Salvation and service cannot be separated, even in such endeavor as educational work:

The school and college have long been a familiar element in missionary enterprise. This is so, not because education in itself is salvation, but because the awakened mind, the power to read and think, emancipation from the fears of ignorance, are all part of the birthright of man as loved of God.³

Thus service is not a missionary option, but is just as essential as the offering of salvation, in that the fruits of service belong as rightfully to men as does salvation itself. The gaining of health and life are implicit in salvation, along with the discarding of fears and evils.⁴

The ultimate end of Christian service, Cragg makes clear in a number of ways, is a knowledge of God. He shows how this is true of educational work by saying that "Christian service to the minds of men...most of all...exists to

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1. Ibid., p. 226.
2. Ibid., pp. 241-242.
3. Ibid., pp. 237-238.
4. Ibid., p. 225.

transmit the sacred knowledge of the saving deeds of God."¹

D. Summary

The following will attempt to summarize the chief elements in Cragg's approach to Islam.

Kenneth Cragg's approach to Islam in terms of evaluation is to give Islam largely positive values in his discussions. He speaks of Islam and its beliefs respectfully, and indicates that Islam can have good effects on men, and that it has something valid to say about God and man. Cragg believes that the God of Islam is the same Being as the God of the Christians. He is very indirect in any criticism of Muhammad, and speaks well of him wherever possible. The Quran is treated as a genuine religious expression that may well be true revelation at least in part. Cragg looks upon Islamic reform movements hopefully and with encouragement, and claims this as the proper attitude for the Church.

Cragg emphasizes the actual confrontation of Islam and Christianity, pointing out that this is an essential element in the light of their natures and their contemporary situation. A relationship exists necessarily, and it should be made a positive one of mutual fellowship, scholarship, and seeking together. Though there are areas of unfortunate relationship, Cragg's approach calls for determined efforts at seeking out and applying the good relationships that are

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1. Ibid., p. 238.

possible.

In the confrontation itself, Cragg stresses gentleness, humility, understanding, and patience, and he manifests these qualities in his own restrained though accurate criticisms, or in the omission of criticism entirely. He seeks to transcend harsh attitudes, and turn them into positive opportunities for meeting. Communication should characterize the meeting of Islam and Christianity, along with sincere mutual questioning, all without underlying motives. Christians should attempt to approach Islam from within, by sympathetically understanding what it means to be a Muslim in all areas of Islamic life. The intended outcome of the confrontation is that Muslims will become Christians, but the immediate consideration is the making available of the things of Christ and the Christian life, so that the Muslim world might have the opportunity to observe and consider all the benefits thereof.

With regard to sympathy and understanding, the Christian is, in brief, to exercise these qualities to the very utmost in every area of contact with Islam. This is valid for its own sake as well as its being the key to receiving the same attitudes from Muslims themselves.

Cragg recognizes the essential nature of Christian mission, stressing its relevance to contemporary issues, and underlining the importance of the interpretation of Christian ideas. A chief thrust of missions is to enable Islam to recover the identity of Christ.

The importance of proclamation, and the necessity of its interpretative character, are stated by Cragg, along with the need for purifying it of any elements that tend to limit the understanding of Christ's universality.

Cragg feels that the Christian interest in the salvation of men is inseparable from the Christian obligation to serve men's needs. Hence he encourages all forms of service, noting that this is really the illustrative preaching of the Gospel. This underlines his desire that service should ultimately lead its beneficiaries to some sort of additional knowledge of the saving God.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The following paragraphs will attempt to summarize the material of this thesis, and to arrive at some interpretative conclusions about them. The comparing and contrasting of the thinking of Zwemer and Cragg, and their approaches to Islam, will be involved here.

There are about two generations separating the work of Samuel Zwemer and Kenneth Cragg, practically speaking. Both of these men have been Christian clergymen, and both have lived and worked among Muslims. Zwemer was a missionary with scholastic sidelines; Cragg is primarily a scholar and teacher. Zwemer came from an avowedly conservative and evangelical Calvinistic tradition, and he persisted in this outlook. Less is known specifically about Cragg's background in this respect, though it is observed that his theological outlook reflects contemporary theological and political influences.

In relation to the history and development of Islamic nations, the historical positions occupied by Zwemer and Cragg are significant. Zwemer's day was characterized by theological conservatism (so far as his own general environment and contacts were concerned), Western colonialism, and Islamic backwardness. Cragg's day is marked by neo-orthodox theology and ecumenical interest, the rejection of all forms

of colonialism, and the awakening of Islamic nations, both in religious thought and nationalistic aspirations.

Zwemer's day saw a considerable degree of isolation of countries and peoples; in Cragg's time technology and education have reduced isolation to a minimum.

Zwemer and Cragg expressed somewhat different purposes in writing, or expressed their purposes somewhat differently. Zwemer wished to familiarize his reader's with the extent and character of the mission field and its needs, and to challenge the Church and his readers to corporate and individual evangelistic missionary effort against an anti-Christian religion. Cragg is seeking peaceful ways of witnessing to the Gospel, by concentrating on knowing Islam and its followers as deeply and sympathetically as possible. He wishes above all to be relevant and interpretative in his contacts with Muslims. Zwemer's purpose was to acquaint his readers with the enemy Islam; Cragg is introducing his readers to friends in need, the Muslims.

In their writings themselves, which may be considered the initial approach to Islam (so far as a Muslim reader or student of their work is concerned), Zwemer and Cragg showed a considerable degree of contrast. Outside of a few rather minor positive comments, Zwemer was openly and harshly critical of almost everything in Islam, and indicated strongly that he regarded the whole system as a thing of basically no value to mankind. Even further than

giving it no value, he described it as a positive evil, and a definitely anti-Christian force. He used militaristic expressions and defined the Islamic-Christian relationship as fundamentally and integrally one of antithesis and enmity. He defamed the elements and the personalities of Islam as either evil, useless, or sub-Christian, and gave Islam no hope or encouragement for the uplifting of itself, for it was to him a dying system. All these things he spoke of openly in his books, where they were accessible to any Muslim or aspiring Christian missionary.

In this initial approach of evaluation, Cragg expresses himself quite differently. His way of speaking of Islam is predominantly and purposefully uncritical, and he treats Islam as a thing of real value in both its insights and conclusions. He never speaks of it as anti-Christian, and he states Islamic-Christian differences as gently as possible. He shows genuine respect and even reverence for Islam, a fact which is related to his affirmation that Islam and Christianity both speak of the same God. Cragg's expressions are characteristically those of peace, friendship, and mutuality. Where Zwemer treated Islam as a thing to destroy and replace with Christianity, Cragg speaks of it as something to build upon with the additional insights of Christianity. For this reason Cragg is sympathetic and hopeful toward all efforts by Islam to reform itself or make itself more relevant and useful in the world. Cragg's writings reflect an acute awareness

of his potential Muslim audience, though his books are addressed to Christians.

In their treatment of the actual confrontation of Islam and Christianity, many of the differences in these two men persist. Zwemer, as already indicated, related Islam and Christianity only in that they are enemies, and that Christianity is infinitely superior to Islam. Only in a few external matters did he recognize any mutuality of aspiration or aim. Hence the confrontation as Zwemer saw it was fraught with elements of mutual attack and controversy, and with militant evangelistic proclamation on the part of Christians. The defeat of Islam was his aim; reconciliation was not possible unless it involved a complete renunciation of Islam. It is not to be overlooked that there is a basic similarity in the aim of Zwemer and Cragg in that they both desired Muslims to become Christians. Zwemer, however, demanded the complete renunciation of Islam in the process, while Cragg treats Islam as a stepping-stone, if not more.

Cragg treats the relationship between these two faiths as a necessary one which can and ought to have a primarily positive aspect. He believes that this is dictated by the very nature of the two religions involved. He encourages mutual fellowship, study, and concern for each other's problems of existence in a complex world. Though he recognizes areas of bad relationship, he feels that the feelings involved in such areas should be transcended and

made into opportunities for fruitful meeting. Cragg calls attention to the fact that what he is proposing is very difficult, because it involves deeper probing than usual, and has many subjective elements. Zwemer affirmed difficulties in his approach also, but they were of a more subjective and external nature.

The problems of sympathy and understanding reveal a marked contrast in the approaches of these men. Cragg encourages "strenuous" sympathy for the Muslim world and for Muslims at every point, and urges the Christian to try to understand what it means to be a Muslim in every walk of Islamic life. Only in this way, he feels, will one know how to approach them as Christians. Cragg tries to approach Islam from within. Zwemer, on the other hand, approaches Islam from without. For him the situation was simply that Muslims were a group of people who needed many things, but primarily the Gospel message for their salvation. Christians were to go and give them this message, and help out in their difficulties if possible. It was an external problem with an objective solution, and this was the way he approached Islam. This is not to say that he ~~did~~ not feel for the Muslims, or did not love them, sympathize with them, or understand them--though it may be wondered in some cases whether he really did understand Muslims as deeply as he might have. At any rate, Zwemer put his emphasis on understanding the message, rather than on understanding the Muslims, and he strove to know Christ, rather than to know

the details of sympathy and understanding. He did have these qualities, especially as he saw increasing need for them in later years, but he never felt the obligation to spell them out in the way that Cragg does today.

The chief aspect of the confrontation for Zwemer was in the field of missions, through which he mainly attempted to convey the Good News, under the urgency of mankind's universal need for this saving message, though he felt also that Islam had a particular promise from God through Ishmael. Zwemer opposed any notion of comparative religion in missions. He felt further that the problems, successes, and failures of missions ultimately depended upon the right exercise of faith.

Though Cragg does not disclaim faith in any way, he seems to feel that man himself can do a great deal to help or hinder the Christian mission, and thus goes to great length to spell things out in detail. Cragg also feels the urgency of missions, but bases it less upon ultimate salvation than upon the needs of contemporary worldly life. Cragg wishes God and Christ to be receiving their proper worship from man, and he stresses the need for interpreting the Christian concepts of this into the terms of Islam.

Both Zwemer and Cragg affirmed the essential nature of Christian proclamation, though Zwemer defined its message somewhat more narrowly than Cragg, and approached it more objectively. Cragg underlines the absolute need for interpretation and conveyance of meaning, without which

proclamation as such is nullified.

Though both men saw the need for service and encouraged it, their degrees of doing so were different, along with their motivations for serving. Zwemer saw service as good and needful, but decidedly secondary to the proclamation of the facts of the Gospel of salvation. Cragg sees service as an integral part of any intent for salvation, for he feels that the fruits and benefits of service are of the same essence in life as salvation itself. Hence, practically speaking, he stresses service and worldly concern about equally with the proclaiming of the message. This also follows from his emphasis on understanding and sympathy.

Though there is a large body of material involved in comparing the views of Zwemer and Cragg, and though there are numerous points of conflict or apparent conflict, the final conclusions in the matter may be less complex. In looking back over the material, there are two main points that are extremely relevant, and which color one's entire evaluation of the situation.

One point that appears necessary of affirmation is that both of these men must be called Christians. To say that one or another is not a Christian in a very full sense of the word is to contradict the evidence and invite very serious complications in many areas. The other point is that these men lived in two different ages having

different characteristics as already described. Zwemer and Cragg lived in different surroundings, assisted by different technologies, and facing different problems.

This, it seems, is the point to which one must ultimately come in attempting to give the reasons for the difference in these two approaches to Islam. These are two different men with two different approaches for two different ages. Their ultimate aim is identical, to bring Muslims to Christ. But they stated their aims differently, and they went about fulfilling them in different ways, not always emphasizing the same elements. One may criticize either man on a multitude of points, but the main comment for each would seem to be that Zwemer was too definite and objective at times, and Cragg is too indefinite and subjective at times. Some of these "times" are rather crucial, it is true. But in the end, not much more can be said than this, without getting into a welter of detail which is not really to the point.

In short, both Samuel Zwemer and Kenneth Cragg are addressing their own times, speaking in terms of their own environments. They both, however, have the same timeless aim, and both offer facets of universal and timeless truths. Whether either man is ultimately "right" in his approach is difficult, if not impossible for us to fully estimate. To all appearances God's Spirit and God's Love have worked in both of these men. The best we can do is see what they have to say, illumining it by our own study of God's Word, and trusting God's Spirit to lead us into all Truth, as He promised.

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